

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A STRANGE STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY NOVEL," "RIENZI," &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE belief prevalent in the town ascribed the murder of Sir Philip to the violence of some vulgar robber, probably not an inhabitant of L—. Mr. Vigors did not favour that belief. He intimated an opinion, which seemed extravagant and groundless, that Sir Philip had been murdered, for the sake not of the missing purse, but of the missing casket. It was currently believed that the solemn magistrate had consulted one of his pretended *clairvoyants*, and that this impostor had gulled him with assurances, to which he attached a credit that perverted into egregiously absurd directions his characteristic activity and zeal.

Be that as it may, the coroner's inquest closed without casting any light on so mysterious a tragedy.

What were my own conjectures I scarcely dared to admit—I certainly could not venture to utter them. But my suspicions centred upon Margrave. That for some reason or other he had cause to dread Sir Philip's presence in L— was clear, even to my reason. And how could my reason reject all the influences which had been brought to bear on my imagination, whether by the scene in the museum or my conversations with the deceased? But it was impossible to act on such suspicions—impossible even to confide them. Could I have told to any man the effect produced on me in the museum, he would have considered me a liar or a madman. And in Sir Philip's accusations against Margrave, there was nothing tangible—nothing that could bear repetition. Those accusations, if analysed, vanished into air. What did they imply?—that Margrave was a magician, a monstrous prodigy, a creature exceptional to the ordinary conditions of humanity. Would the most reckless of mortals have ventured to bring against the worst of characters such a charge, on the authority of a deceased witness, and to found on evidence so fantastic the awful accusation of murder? But of all men, certainly I—a sober, practical physician—was the last whom the public could excuse for such incredible implications—and certainly, of all men, the last against whom any suspicion of heinous crime would be

readily entertained was that joyous youth in whose sunny aspect life and conscience alike seemed to keep careless holiday. But I could not overcome, nor did I attempt to reason against, the horror akin to detestation, that had succeeded to the fascinating attraction by which Margrave had before conciliated a liking founded rather on admiration than esteem.

In order to avoid his visits I kept away from the study in which I had habitually spent my mornings, and to which he had been accustomed to so ready an access. And if he called at the front door I directed my servant to tell him that I was either from home or engaged. He did attempt for the first few days to visit me as before, but when my intention to shun him became thus manifest, desisted; naturally enough, as any other man so pointedly repelled would have done.

I abstained from all those houses in which I was likely to meet him; and went my professional round of visits in a close carriage; so that I might not be accosted by him in his walks.

One morning, a very few days after Strahan had shown me Sir Philip Derval's letter, I received a note from my old college acquaintance, stating that he was going to Derval Court that afternoon; that he should take with him the memoir which he had found; and begging me to visit him at his new home the next day, and commence my inspection of the manuscript. I consented eagerly.

That morning, on going my round, my carriage passed by another drawn up to the pavement, and I recognised the figure of Margrave standing beside the vehicle, and talking to some one seated within it. I looked back, as my own carriage whirled rapidly by, and saw with uneasiness and alarm that it was Richard Strahan to whom Margrave was thus familiarly addressing himself. How had the two made acquaintance? Was it not an outrage on Sir Philip Derval's memory, that the heir he had selected should be thus apparently intimate with the man whom he had so sternly denounced? I became still more impatient to read the memoir—in all probability it would give such explanations with respect to Margrave's antecedents, as, if not sufficing to criminate him of legal offences, would at least effectually terminate any acquaintance between Sir Philip's successor and himself.

All my thoughts were, however, diverted to channels of far deeper interest even than those in which my mind had of late been so tumultuously whirled along; when, on returning home, I found a note from Mrs. Ashleigh. She and Lillian had just come back to L—, sooner than she had led me to anticipate. Lillian had not seemed quite well the last day or two, and had been anxious to return.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LET me recal it—softly—softly! Let me recal that evening spent with her!—that evening, the last before darkness rose between us like a solid wall.

It was evening, at the close of summer. The sun had set, the twilight was lingering still. We were in the old monastic garden—garden so quiet, so cool, so fragrant. She was seated on a bench under the one great cedar-tree that rose sombre in the midst of the grassy lawn, with its little paradise of flowers. I had thrown myself on the sward at her feet; her hand so confidently lay in the clasp of mine. I see her still—how young, how fair, how innocent!

Strange, strange! So inexpressibly English; so thoroughly the creature of our sober, homely life! The pretty delicate white robe that I touch so timorously, and the ribbon-knots of blue that so well become the soft colour of the fair cheek, the wavy silk of the brown hair! She is murmuring low her answer to my trembling question—

“As well as when last we parted? Do you love me as well still?”

“There is no ‘still’ written here,” said she, softly, pressing her hand to her heart. “Yesterday is as to-morrow in the For ever.”

“Ah! Lillian, if I could reply to you in words as akin to poetry as your own.”

“Fie! you who affect not to care for poetry!”

“That was before you went away—before I missed you from my eyes, from my life—before I was quite conscious how precious you were to me, more precious than common words can tell! Yes, there is one period in love when all men are poets, however the penury of their language may belie the luxuriance of their fancies. What would become of me if you ceased to love me?”

“Or of me, if you could cease to love?”

“And somehow it seems to me this evening as if my heart drew nearer to you—nearer as if for shelter.”

“It is sympathy,” said she, with tremulous eagerness; “that sort of mysterious sympathy which I have often heard you deny or deride; for I, too, feel drawn nearer to you, as if there were a storm at hand. I was oppressed by an indescribable terror in returning home, and the moment I saw you there came a sense of protection.”

Her head sank on my shoulder; we were silent some moments; then we both rose by the same involuntary impulse, and round her slight form I twined my strong arm of man. And now we are winding slow under the lilacs and acacias that belt the lawn. Lillian has not yet heard of the murder,

which forms the one topic of the town, for all tales of violence and blood affected her as they affect a fearful child. Mrs. Ashleigh, therefore, had judiciously concealed from her the letters and the journals by which the dismal news had been carried to herself. I need scarcely say that the grim subject was not broached by me. In fact, my own mind escaped from the events which had of late so perplexed and tormented it; the tranquillity of the scene, the bliss of Lillian’s presence, had begun to chase away even that melancholy foreboding which had overshadowed me in the first moments of our reunion. So we came gradually to converse of the future—of the day, not far distant, when we two should be as one. We planned our bridal excursion. We would visit the scenes endeared to her by song, to me by childhood—the banks and waves of my native Windermere—our one brief holiday before life returned to labour, and hearts now so disquieted by hope and joy settled down to the calm serenity of home.

As we thus talked, the moon, nearly rounded to her full, rose amidst skies without a cloud. We paused to gaze on her solemn haunting beauty, as where are the lovers who have not paused to gaze? We were then on the terrace walk, which commanded a view of the town below. Before us was a parapet wall, low on the garden side, but inaccessible on the outer side, forming part of a straggling irregular street that made one of the boundaries dividing Abbey Hill from Low Town. The lamps of the thoroughfares, in many a line and row beneath us, stretched far away, obscured, here and there, by intervening roofs and tall church towers. The hum of the city came to our ears, low and mellowed into a lulling sound. It was not displeasing to be reminded that there was a world without, as close and closer we drew each to each—worlds to one another! Suddenly, there carolled forth the song of a human voice—a wild, irregular, half-savage melody—foreign, uncomprehended words—air and words not new to me. I recognised the voice and chant of Margrave. I started, and uttered an angry exclamation.

“Hush!” whispered Lillian, and I felt her frame shiver within my encircling arm. “Hush! listen! Yes; I have heard that voice before—last night—”

“Last night! you were not here; you were more than a hundred miles away.”

“I heard it in a dream! Hush, hush!”

The song rose louder; impossible to describe its effect, in the midst of the tranquil night, chiming over the serried roof-tops, and under the solitary moon. It was not like the artful song of man, for it was defective in the methodical harmony of tune; it was not like the song of the wild bird, for it had no monotony in its sweetness: it was wandering and various as the sounds from an Æolian harp. But it affected the senses to a powerful degree, as in remote lands and in vast solitudes I have since found the note of the mocking-bird, suddenly heard,

affect the listener half with delight, half with awe, as if some demon creature of the desert were mimicking man for its own merriment. The chant now had changed into an air of defying glee, of menacing exultation; it might have been the triumphant war-song of some antique barbarian tribe. The note was sinister; a shudder passed through me, and Lilian had closed her eyes, and was sighing heavily; then with a rapid change, sweet as the coo with which an Arab mother lulls her babe to sleep, the melody died away. "There, there, look," murmured Lilian, moving from me, "the same I saw last night in sleep; the same I saw in the space above, on the evening I first knew you!"

Her eyes were fixed—her hand raised; my look followed hers, and rested on the face and form of Margrave. The moon shone full upon him, so full as if concentrating all its light upon his image. The place on which he stood (a balcony to the upper story of a house about fifty yards distant) was considerably above the level of the terrace from which we gazed on him. His arms were folded on his breast, and he appeared to be looking straight towards us. Even at that distance the lustrous youth of his countenance appeared to me terribly distinct, and the light of his wondrous eye seemed to rest upon us in one lengthened, steady ray through the limpid moonshine. Involuntarily I seized Lilian's hand, and drew her away almost by force, for she was unwilling to move, and as I led her back, she turned her head to look round; I, too, turned in jealous rage! I breathed more freely. Margrave had disappeared.

"How came he there? It is not his hotel. Whose house is it?" I said aloud, though speaking to myself.

Lilian remained silent; her eyes fixed upon the ground as if in deep reverie. I took her hand; it did not return my pressure. I felt cut to the heart when she drew coldly from me that hand, till then so frankly cordial. I stopped short: "Lilian, what is this? you are chilled towards me. Can the mere sound of that man's voice, the mere glimpse of that man's face, have—" I paused; I did not dare to complete my question.

Lilian lifted her eyes to mine, and I saw at once in those eyes a change. Their look was cold; not haughty, but abstracted. "I do not understand you," she said, in a weary, listless accent. "It is growing late; I must go in."

So we walked on moodily, no longer arm in arm, nor hand in hand. Then, it occurred to me that, the next day, Lilian would be in that narrow world of society; that there she could scarcely fail to hear of Margrave, to meet, to know him. Jealousy seized me with all its imaginary terrors, and amidst that jealousy a nobler, purer apprehension for herself. Had I been Lilian's brother instead of her betrothed, I should not have trembled less to foresee the shadow of Margrave's mysterious influence passing over a mind so predisposed to the charm which Mystery itself has

for those whose thoughts fuse their outlines in fancies;—whose world melts away into Dream-land. Therefore I spoke.

"Lilian, at the risk of offending you—alas! I have never done so before this night—I must address to you a prayer which I implore you not to regard as the dictate of a suspicion unworthy you and myself. The person whom you have just heard and seen is, at present, much courted in the circles of this town. I entreat you not to permit any one to introduce him to you. I entreat you not to know him. I cannot tell you all my reasons for this petition; enough that I pledge you my honour that those reasons are grave. Trust, then, in my truth as I trust in yours. Be assured that I stretch not the rights which your heart has bestowed upon mine in the promise I ask, as I shall be freed from all fear by a promise which I know will be sacred when once it is given."

"What promise?" asked Lilian, absently, as if she had not heard my words.

"What promise? Why, to refuse all acquaintance with that man; his name is Margrave. Promise me, dearest, promise me."

"Why is your voice so changed?" said Lilian. "It's tone jars on my ear," she added, with a peevishness so unlike her, that it startled me more than it offended; and, without a word further, she quickened her pace, and entered the house.

For the rest of the evening we were both taciturn and distant towards each other. In vain Mrs. Ashleigh kindly sought to break down our mutual reserve. I felt that I had the right to be resentful, and I clung to that right the more because Lilian made no attempt at reconciliation. This, too, was wholly unlike herself, for her temper was ordinarily sweet—sweet to the extreme of meekness; saddened if the slightest misunderstanding between us had ever vexed me, and yearning to ask forgiveness if a look or a word had pained me. I was in hopes that, before I went away, peace between us would be restored. But long ere her usual hour for retiring to rest, she rose abruptly, and complaining of fatigue and headache, wished me good night, and avoided the hand I sorrowfully held out to her as I opened the door.

"You must have been very unkind to poor Lilian," said Mrs. Ashleigh, between jest and earnest, "for I never saw her so cross to you before. And the first day of her return, too!"

"The fault is not mine," said I, somewhat sullenly; "I did but ask Lilian, and that as a humble prayer, not to make the acquaintance of a stranger in this town against whom I have reasons for distrust and aversion. I know not why that prayer should displease her."

"Nor I. Who is the stranger?"

"A person who calls himself Margrave. Let me at least entreat you to avoid him!"

"Oh, I have no desire to make acquaintance with strangers. But, now Lilian is gone, do tell me all about this dreadful murder? The ser-

vants are full of it, and I cannot keep it long concealed from Lillian. I was in hopes that you would have broken it to her."

I rose impatiently; I could not bear to talk thus of an event the tragedy of which was associated in my mind with circumstances so mysterious. I became agitated and even angry when Mrs. Ashleigh persisted in rambling woman-like inquiries—"Who was suspected of the deed? Who did I think had committed it? What sort of a man was Sir Philip? What was that strange story about a casket?" Breaking from such interrogations, to which I could give but abrupt and evasive answers, I seized my hat, and took my departure.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LETTER FROM ALLEN FENWICK TO LILIAN ASHLEIGH.

"I have promised to go to Derval Court to-day, and shall not return till to-morrow. I cannot bear the thought that so many hours should pass away with one feeling less kind than usual resting like a cloud upon you and me. Lillian, if I offended you, forgive me? Send me one line to say so?—one line which I can place next to my heart and cover with grateful kisses till we meet again?"

REPLY.

"I scarcely know what you mean, nor do I quite understand my own state of mind at this moment. It cannot be that I love you less—and yet—but I will not write more now. I feel glad that we shall not meet for the next day or so, and then I hope to be quite recovered. I am not well at this moment. Do not ask me to forgive you—but if it is I who am in fault—forgive me, oh, forgive me, Allen."

And with this unsatisfactory note—not worn next my heart, not covered with kisses, but thrust crumpled into my desk like a creditor's unwelcome bill—I flung myself on my horse and rode to Derval Court. I was naturally proud; my pride came now to my aid. I felt bitterly indignant against Lillian, so indignant that I resolved on my return to say to her, "If in those words, 'And yet,' you implied a doubt whether you loved me less, I cancel your vows, I give you back your freedom." And I could have passed from her threshold with a firm foot, though with the certainty that I should never smile again.

Does her note seem to you who may read these pages to justify such resentment? Perhaps not. But there is an atmosphere in the letters of the one we love, which we alone—we who love—can feel, and in the atmosphere of that letter I felt the chill of the coming winter.

I reached the park lodge of Derval Court late in the day. I had occasion to visit some patients whose houses lay scattered many miles apart, and for that reason, as well as from the desire for some quick bodily exercise which is so natural

an effect of irritable perturbation of mind, I had made the journey on horseback instead of using a carriage, that I could not have got through the lanes and field-paths by which alone the work set to myself could be accomplished in time.

Just as I entered the park, an uneasy thought seized hold of me with the strength which is ascribed to presentiments. I had passed through my study (which has been so elaborately described) to my stables, as I generally did when I wanted my saddle-horse, and, in so doing, had, doubtless, left open the gate to the iron palisade, and, probably, the window of the study itself. I had been in this careless habit for several years, without ever once having cause for self-reproach. As I before said, there was nothing in my study to tempt a thief; the study shut out from the body of the house, and the servant sure at nightfall both to close the window and lock the gate;—yet now, for the first time, I felt an impulse, urgent, keen, and disquieting, to ride back to the town and see those precautions taken. I could not guess why, but something whispered to me that my neglect had exposed me to some great danger. I even checked my horse and looked at my watch; too late!—already just on the stroke of Strahan's dinner-hour as fixed in his note; my horse, too, was fatigued and spent; besides, what folly! what bearded man can believe in the warnings of a "presentiment." I pushed on, and soon halted before the old-fashioned flight of stairs that led up to the hall. Here I was accosted by the old steward; he had just descended the stairs, and, as I dismounted, he thrust his arm into mine unceremoniously, and drew me a little aside.

"Doctor, I was right; it was his ghost that I saw by the iron door of the mausoleum. I saw it again at the same place last night, but I had no fit then. Justice on his murderer! Blood for blood!"

"Ay!" said I, sternly; for if I suspected Margrave before, I felt convinced now that the inexpiable deed was his. Wherefore convinced? Simply because I now hated him more, and hate is so easily convinced! "Lillian! Lillian!" I murmured to myself that name; the flame of my hate was fed by my jealousy. "Ay!" said I, sternly, "murder will out."

"What are the police about?" said the old man, querulously; "days pass on days, and no nearer the truth. But what does the new owner care? He has the rents and acres; what does he care for the dead? I will never serve another master. I have just told Mr. Strahan so. How do I know whether he did not do the deed? Who else had an interest in it?"

"Hush, hush!" I cried; "you do not know what you say so wildly."

The old man stared at me, shook his head, released my arm, and strode away.

A labouring man came out of the garden, and having unbuckled the saddle-bags, which contained the few things required for so short a visit, I consigned my horse to his care, and ascended the perron. The old housekeeper met me

in the hall, conducted me up the great staircase, showed me into a bedroom prepared for me, and told me that Mr. Strahan was already waiting dinner for me. I should find him in the study. I hastened to join him. He began apologising, very unnecessarily, for the state of his establishment. He had, as yet, engaged no new servants. The housekeeper, with the help of a housemaid, did all the work.

Richard Strahan at college had been as little distinguishable from other young men as a youth neither rich nor poor, neither clever nor stupid, neither handsome nor ugly, neither audacious sinner nor formal saint, possibly could be.

Yet, to those who understood him well, he was not without some of those moral qualities by which a youth of mediocre intellect often matures into a superior man.

He was, as Sir Philip had been rightly informed, thoroughly honest and upright. But with a strong sense of duty, there was also a certain latent hardness. He was not indulgent. He had outward frankness with acquaintances, but was easily roused to suspicion. He had much of the thriftiness and self-denial of the North Countryman, and I have no doubt that he had lived with calm content and systematic economy on an income which made him, as a bachelor, independent of his nominal profession, but would not have sufficed, in itself, for the fitting maintenance of a wife and family. He was, therefore, still single.

It seemed to me, even during the few minutes in which we conversed before dinner was announced, that his character showed a new phase with his new fortunes. He talked in a grandiose style of the duties of station and the woes of wealth. He seemed to be very much afraid of spending, and still more appalled at the idea of being cheated. His temper, too, was ruffled; the steward had given him notice to quit. Mr. Jeeves, who had spent the morning with him, had said the steward would be a great loss, and a steward, at once sharp and honest, was not to be easily found.

What trifles can embitter the possession of great goods! Strahan had taken a fancy to the old house; it was conformable to his notions, both of comfort and pomp, and Sir Philip had expressed a desire that the old house should be pulled down. Strahan had inspected the plans for the new mansion to which Sir Philip had referred, and the plans did not please him; on the contrary, they terrified.

"Jeeves says that I could not build such a house under seventy or eighty thousand pounds, and then it will require twice the establishment which will suffice for this. I shall be ruined," cried the man who had just come into possession of at least twelve thousand a year.

"Sir Philip did not enjoin you to pull down the old house; he only advised you to do so. Perhaps he thought the site less healthy than that which he proposes for a new building, or was aware of some other drawback to the house, which you

may discover later. Wait a little and see before deciding."

"But, at all events, I suppose I must pull down this curious old room—the nicest part of the whole house!"

Strahan, as he spoke, looked wistfully round at the quaint oak chimney-piece; the carved ceiling; the well-built solid walls, with the large mullion casement, opening so pleasantly on the sequestered gardens. He had ensconced himself in Sir Philip's study, the chamber in which the once famous mystic, Forman, had found a refuge.

"So cozy a room for a single man!" sighed Strahan. "Near the stables and dog-kennels, too! But I suppose I must pull it down. I am not bound to do so legally; it is no condition of the will. But in honour and gratitude I ought not to disobey poor Sir Philip's positive injunction."

"Of that," said I, gravely, "there cannot be a doubt."

Here our conversation was interrupted by Mrs. Gates, who informed us that dinner was served in the library. Wine of great age was brought from the long-neglected cellars; Strahan filled and refilled his glass, and, warmed into hilarity, began to talk of bringing old college friends around him in the winter season, and making the roof-tree ring with laughter and song once more.

Time wore away, and night had long set in, when Strahan at last rose from the table, his speech thick and his tongue unsteady. We returned to the study, and I reminded my host of the special object of my visit to him, viz. the inspection of Sir Philip's manuscript.

"It is tough reading," said Strahan; "better put it off till to-morrow. You will stay here two or three days."

"No; I must return to L—to-morrow. I cannot absent myself from my patients. And it is the more desirable that no time should be lost before examining the contents of the manuscript, because probably they may give some clue to the detection of the murderer."

"Why do you think that?" cried Strahan, startled from the drowsiness that was creeping over him.

"Because the manuscript may show that Sir Philip had some enemy—and who but an enemy could have had a motive for such a crime? Come, bring forth the book. You of all men are bound to be alert in every research that may guide the retribution of justice to the assassin of your benefactor."

"Yes, yes. I will offer a reward of five thousand pounds for the discovery. Allen, that wretched old steward had the insolence to tell me that I was the only man in the world who could have an interest in the death of his master; and he looked at me as if he thought that I had committed the crime. You are right, it becomes me, of all men, to be alert. The assassin must be found. He must hang."

While thus speaking, Strahan had risen, un-

locked a desk which stood on one of the safes, and drawn forth a thick volume, the contents of which were protected by a clasp and lock. Strahan proceeded to open this lock by one of a bunch of keys, which he said had been found on Sir Philip's person.

"There, Allen, this is the memoir. I need not tell you what store I place on it; not, between you and me, that I expect it will warrant poor Sir Philip's high opinion of his own scientific discoveries. That part of his letter seems to me very queer, and very flighty. But he evidently set his heart on the publication of his work, in part if not in whole. And, naturally, I must desire to comply with a wish so distinctly intimated by one to whom I owe so much. I beg you, therefore, not to be too fastidious. Some valuable hints in medicine, I have reason to believe, the manuscript will contain, and those may help you in your profession, Allen."

"You have reason to believe! Why?"

"Oh, a charming young fellow, who, with most of the other gentry resident at L—, called on me at my hotel, told me that he had travelled in the East, and had there heard much of Sir Philip's knowledge of chemistry, and the cures it had enabled him to perform."

"You speak of Mr. Margrave. He called on you?"

"Yes."

"You did not, I trust, mention to him the existence of Sir Philip's manuscript."

"Indeed I did; and I said you had promised to examine it. He seemed delighted at that, and spoke most highly of your peculiar fitness for the task."

"Give me the manuscript," said I abruptly, "and, after I have looked at it to-night, I may have something to say to you to-morrow in reference to Mr. Margrave."

"There is the book," said Strahan; "I have just glanced at it, and find much of it written in Latin; and I am ashamed to say that I have so neglected the little Latin I learned in our college days, that I could not construe what I looked at."

I sat down and placed the book before me; Strahan fell into a doze, from which he was awakened by the housekeeper, who brought in the tea-things.

"Well," said Strahan, languidly, "do you find much in the book that explains the many puzzling riddles in poor Sir Philip's eccentric life and pursuits?"

"Yes," said I. "Do not interrupt me."

Strahan again began to doze, and the housekeeper asked if we should want anything more that night, and if I thought I could find my way to my bedroom.

I dismissed her impatiently, and continued to read.

Strahan woke up again as the clock struck eleven, and finding me still absorbed in the manuscript, and disinclined to converse, lighted his candle, and telling me to replace the manuscript

in the desk when I had done with it, and be sure to lock the desk and take charge of the key, which he took off the bunch and gave me, went up-stairs, yawning.

I was alone, in the wizard Forman's chamber, and bending over a stranger record than had ever excited my infant wonder, or, in later years, provoked my sceptic smile.

THE YELLOW PAMPHLET.

THERE is not a German prince more deservedly popular with Fatherland in general, and more undeservedly unpopular with his own subjects in particular, than the Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, brother of our Prince Consort. Duke Ernest means well and does well. Scorning the make-believes of petty royalty, he determines to work out liberal political ideas upon the home material, as well as utter them in the way of abstract speculation. But the fact that he does so to the great disgust of the said home material, one of his friends has declared lately in print, and he, in a reply also printed, has himself confessed and endeavoured to explain. The declaration, with the dual confession and interpretation, form together a little yellow pamphlet, that has this year given its extra tinge of yellow to the faces of the Fatherlandic aristocrats and bureaucrats wherever German is a spoken tongue, and that must have given a few very bilious headaches to the august personage who lately, with great solemnity, picked his crown up from a table, as a sign of his divine right thereto, and of the instinctive belief, doubtless, that an august headship like his can only be shown taking its origin from something wooden. So he preferred the wood of an altar to the flesh and blood of an archbishop as giver of the crown by which he declared himself ligneal and irresponsible king of a great people. Within the yellow cover, Duke Ernest, a German prince, higher than the best emperor in family connexions, laughs at the "right divine." After 1848, he says, when his stupid people rose for what, during the previous years, they had been resisting his attempts to give them, "I ordered the formula 'by the grace of God' to be struck from the head of the amnesties. This departure from custom, this open ideal rupture with what they call sovereignty by grace of God, was reckoned against me as a great offence." The most graciously divine of Prussia gave this bold duke a few side hits in form of compliment at a review the other day.

But the Duke Ernest does not flinch from any sort of hitting; he is a frank, generous man, whom any wholesome Englishman, concerned in public life, given to hard work and active relaxation, rigid in fair discharge of his duty, and eager with his gun on the moors, making a home of his house and impartial in his hospitality, at once can understand. Nevertheless, in Gotha, at least, there are many to whom his character is a vexatious puzzle. His people will be wise enough in time, no doubt,

and to the manner used, for this is the duke to whom Prince Alfred of England is next heir.

The yellow pamphlet was brought to life in consequence of a sketch of the duke by Herr Eduard Schmidt-Weissenfels, who wrote, after a stay in Gotha—during which he learnt himself to appreciate the duke, and observed how little he was appreciated by his people—his sketch of the duke, in the *Leipziger Sonntagsblatt*, a journal widely read in Thuringia, and taken in by many of the wise men of Gotha. It was a frank sketch, of which the friendliness might excuse the impertinence. Fetching the duke so far out of his privacy that we are almost told in it where he gets his cigars, the article does him a large measure of justice, while it very boldly and plainly sets forth the fact, and the assigned causes, of his unpopularity, within his own domain. Only a German who talks in his preface like M. Schmidt-Weissenfels, about his highness's objectivity and subjectivity, would think of anatomising that or any other living highness with so curious a scalpel. The peculiarly frank and friendly character of the prince given over to this sort of friendly vivisection, could alone make such an operation possible. The design of the duke's friend was to smoke a pipe of peace over the duke, while cutting him up to show his subjects particularly as well as Germany generally, what was in him, and to increase good will by the establishment of better understanding. The duke not only submitted kindly to the knife, but, taking up a scalpel of his own, magnanimously has assisted with his own hand in dissection of himself.

Schmidt-Weissenfels, as demonstrator of ducal anatomy, thus makes his first incision in the outer tissue of his subject.—When you leave the solitary Gotha railway station, a broad road leads between some ploughed fields to a noble avenue of trees, with elegant and pleasant villas set in gardens, and a few even palatial houses upon either side. This is the entrance to the pleasant ducal town of Gotha, second capital of Thuringia, the town itself being here concealed from view behind the park, with its great pines, beeches, oaks, and chesnut-trees, high above whose tops rises the imposing structure of the ducal residence, built in the days of the Thirty Years' War by Duke Ernest the Pious. The black slate roof and the two towering wings of this Friedenstein are to be seen from far away upon the fields and mountains of Thuringia.

Right and left of the town is a level cultivated plain, but on the other side of the railway begins the upward swell into the Thuringian forest-covered mountain chain, with the Inselsberg high above all. Pleasant Gotha, with its little white houses, gardens, and villas, lies in its smiling plain near to the mighty hills, and at the feet of the great residence surrounded by its park. It is a much cozier town than Weimar, and its sixteen thousand inhabitants are only too well disposed to enjoy themselves, letting the world run as it will. A few elegant shops, and the abundance of crinoline, testify to the fact

that Gotha is a ducal residence, but the Gotha tradesmen and mechanics do not work very hard, and are given to long gossip over the beer-jug after their day's work is done.

Gotha is strictly a ducal residence only from New Year to Easter. The rest of the year the duke gives to Coburg, his other capital, and Reinhardsbrunn, his autumn hunting-box, for the Duke Ernest is one of the most vigorous of sportsmen, and has half the Thuringian forest—much of it bought at high price from unwilling sellers—for his game preserve.

Where the duke is, the theatre is: at Gotha from New Year to Easter; at Coburg the rest of the year, except in the months from July to September. It is a court theatre, of course, and the duke's taste for theatrical amusement, but especially for music, in which he has a special genius of his own, causes it to be remarkably well cared for. The Gotha Theatre, with an imposing front and bad interior, is excelled by not more than two theatres of Germany in the completeness of its scenery, machinery, and stage appointments. It is open four nights a week, twice for plays, and twice for operas. The duke himself is present at nearly all the performances—not in the great state box, which he leaves to his courtiers, but in a little stage box, where he gossips with his wife, watches closely all that is good, applauds as heartily as any man all that he likes, and can slip out now and then between the acts, by a side door, to the stage, to compliment and to give personal directions as the manager-in-chief. One of his councillors, who has written patriotic plays, is now his stage director. The Gotha people want their theatre. Every one who can subscribes for the season. The house holds sixteen hundred, and the town only holds sixteen thousand, yet the house is always full.

Another circumstance attendant on the duke's presence in Gotha, is the great court ball in January. Five or six hundred of the Gotha people are invited. Then between the ancestral portraits in the corridor, and in the state saloons of Friedenstein, low pitched, but highly ornamented in rococo, are all the officials in gold and silver uniforms, blazing into darkness the score of military officers who represent the chiefs of the Gotha contingent to the Prussian army. These gold and silver gentlemen are comfortable, easy folk, too lazy by far for the work of dancing. The duke himself, in the gay uniform of a Prussian cuirassier, does dance; he does make plunges out of the knot of court ladies and gentlemen, into the flock of daughters of the burgesses, nearly all arrayed in white, who huddle together and wait patiently for partners. He is ready to dance with the prettiest, to talk with those whom he knows, and in little Gotha everybody knows everybody, though everybody except only the duke, *does* belong to a small and particular clique that knows nobody outside its own limits. The duchess, too, an unaffected and kind-hearted woman, enters with hospitable smiles and friendly words among that flock, towards which her great ladies deign scarcely a

distant glance. Their main hope, however, is in the small officials, young professional men, clerks &c., in plain evening dress, whose head-quarters are near the refreshment-room. These are expected to dance, and are willing to dance, though they well know that they could only abstain from dancing at their peril. With his own hand, next year, the duke would strike out of the list of invited any of those young men whom he saw playing the wallflower. To the state ball all foreigners of note are invited, and at supper-time they join the highest functionaries, who alone of the male sex, except a few husbands, sup at the same table with the duke and duchess. For as there is not a room large enough to contain all the company, the ladies sup at the ducal table, and the bachelors, who are not of the highest social mark, are turned into another room, and committed to the honour of the company of one another.

The masked ball in the theatre at carnival time is the other great gaiety of Gotha, during the duke's presence in the town. It is held in the theatre, and on the condition of wearing fancy dress, admission is free. On such occasions the duke behaves only as a gentleman; he does not, unfortunately, come up to the Gotha ideal of a stuck-up person; condescends too much, and does not measure his attentions by the local rank of those about him; is too likely to talk to a clever stranger and to turn his back upon an ass when the ass may be his own grandpolicier-of-the-high-ducal-copper-scuttle.

He does not even live in state at Friedenstein, but has built for himself a simple little lodge in the main avenue outside the park gates, with an adjacent building for the servants, and a fine Gothic range of stables over the way; for he is choice over horses. In their lodge the duke and his wife live comfortably. The duke, says his anatomist, rises early and works by himself, writing letters, making entries in his diary, receiving his ministers, or going for conference with them to the ministerial residence. He breakfasts simply, alone with the duchess and his guests, if there be any. After breakfast he will spend, perhaps, several hours in lively, clever conversation, somewhat impetuous, and singularly frank. If he has a guest to talk with over a cigar, he tests his power of following a rapid mind in its transitions from grave to gay, and an earnest mind in its tendency to extract from little things their best significance. The liveliness of impulse, says M. Schmidt-Weissenfels, is shown by the duke even in his way of composing music. He has not patience to make round dots while he thinks, but walks up and down his study, whistling, humming, or singing his melody, while the duchess writes from such dictation his idea into notes for the piano, upon which they afterwards are tested.

That is the German journalist's personal impression of a duke who is honoured throughout Germany at large, but therewith he intersperses the opinions of the duke's people. They say that the duke troubles his head too much about high politics, and too little

about his own subjects, whom he underrates, whose government he thinks a work below his talents, and on whom he bestows, in fact, little attention. He brings into the land shoals of strangers, and gives them the best places in his government, while local claims to office and rank are neglected. His people are none the better for the praise he gets from Germany as best of princes. There are many grievances of theirs to be attended to that do not get attention; and the duke does not like to have the truth told him. The Diet is so full of government officials, that you cannot turn round in it without treading on a placeman's toes. No truth comes through that, and there is no more help from the free press. A man may, indeed, think and say what he likes in Coburg-Gotha about Germany and the world in general, but let him speak critically of Coburg-Gotha's own affairs, and if he attack educational arrangements, he may suffer for libel on the education commissioners; if a tax-gatherer should be extortionate it is not safe to say so; even theatrical criticism has to be guarded, lest it run into what might be called libel of his highness's servant.

Herr Eduard Schmidt-Weissenfels goes on to provide partial answers to these matters of complaint, in which he admits an element of truth. It is clear that the whole purpose of his publication was to say these things to the duke boldly and inoffensively, so as to bring about a better understanding between duke and people. The duke's reply gives little hope of that, and through no fault of his own, except in one respect. We think it evident, from his own expression of a constant determination to repress libel, coupled with the just remark applied to himself, that in so small a country nothing can be said or done for public good affecting persons that shall not give personal offence, that he does really deny his press anything like personal freedom in discussing local matters. Of course, where everybody knows everybody, and public matter is a private matter too, as between every one and any one free comment is hard to get and hard to maintain. As regards Peddlington, the Peddlington Free Speaker is in no enviable position, even when there is no duke to be offended by its liberties.

Fuller answers are made by the duke in the yellow pamphlet. 'Until the year eighteen 'twenty-six, says Duke Ernest, the duchy of Gotha had for a century been governed in one spirit by my ancestors on the mother's side, men genial, or somewhat eccentric, or insignificant, but always honest and courteous, with a taste, even in frivolous days, for solidity; solid in luxury and ready to offer hospitality to foreigners of solid worth. Voltaire, and Grimm, and Diderot were entertained by them. None of them troubled themselves about affairs of government, and none of them extracted any cry of pain from among their subjects, who were left to the rule of a powerful, well-salaried bureaucracy supplied from among the numerous families of the nobility. The state was ordered partly by tradition, after an old patriarchal way that

chafed nobody, because of the good understanding between prince and people. Three-fourths of this people are the moderately well-to-do occupants of the plain, who had gradually been acquiring an independence of their own, as the nobles gave less and less attention to the management of their estates, and lived chiefly at court. The other fourth part consists of the ruder inhabitants of the mountain, and the townfolk, whose industry had been for the century repressed by interference of their guilds, and who are still too much the listless followers of custom. This state of affairs endured throughout the French revolution, the wars of the Empire, and the German war of liberty. Gotha remained, therefore, a little patriarchal state when in the year 'twenty-six the line of its own dukes became extinct, and after much controversy Gotha, parted from Altenburg, was joined to Coburg under the rule of my father.—We are not quoting Duke Ernest verbally, but are giving his published thoughts, and in the first person.

My father, energetic and independent, was not received with enthusiasm by the all-powerful bureaucracy of Gotha, which dreaded interference with its privileges, while there was fear also that Gotha would sink into the position of a secondary capital, for the duke must reside also at Coburg. My father, although active, keen-witted, and energetic, was too personally amiable to leave an opposition unconciliated. He overcame great difficulties, and, without disturbing the old course of things, put fresh life into every branch of the government. He was the father of his people, and of much of the prosperity that Gotha now enjoys he was the founder. But he had been born in days of revolution and political catastrophe; he had spent his youth rather in the camp than in the university; modern theories and philosophical views of life and history were strange to him; he was a practical man who opposed every political theorist. Yet for all that he had been the first German prince who (in 'twenty-one) gave to his land (Coburg Saalfeld) a form of liberal constitution. The patriarchal system was destroyed in Coburg when neither prince nor people had in their hearts the spark of an idea of true constitutional government. The result was in Coburg much trouble and dissension, with the growth of a rough democracy as the weed proper to ill-tilled political soil. In Gotha, on the other hand, all went in the old way pleasantly. Gotha was, therefore, the favourite care of my father, and the disorder on the other side of the Thuringian forest was all laid by him at the door of constitutional government, which had had its trial and failed under it. There was a time, we remember, when a son of the same father told us that in England constitutional government was on its trial.

So matters stood, says Duke Ernest, when, after an absence of six years, not counting short visits, I came home at my father's request, in the year 'forty-two. My father and I were one in affection, one in aspiration, sharing the same

delights in art and nature. I naturally had at once a seat and voice in the ministry, and, being active, trained to business, besides regarding as an impartial stranger the men and machinery of state, it was easy to see the strong and the weak points of the government. From my earliest youth, says this duke, I gave almost instinctive allegiance to liberal democratic principles. I was, in the right sense of the word, a child of my time. In month-long visits to Paris, London, and especially Brussels, where we two brothers dwelt for the purpose of study, our family position and our own impulses had easily brought us into intellectual intercourse with notable men, who were not exactly, like Quetelet, our teachers; for example, the two Brouckères, Gerlache, the two brothers Bulwer, Arivabeni, Berger, Count Arconati, and others. Interest in political questions had early been awakened in us, and I went to the University of Bonn with my mind made up and in direct opposition to the reactionary aristocratic views of the professors. It is easily to be understood that when I went home I must often oppose in the cabinet narrow-minded action of an official world, liberal only in name; and although, out of respect for my father, I did not break with the men I opposed, I let them see my mind so clearly that they were little disposed to be my friends. There were few people of real mark then in Gotha. I was obliged to look abroad for higher intercourse, while there were men at home not disposed to forget it if I failed to take them at the valuation they would set upon themselves. The two happy years between my marriage and my father's death, in January, 'forty-four, I spent at home or in travel. When my father's death added to my responsibilities, I began work on a defined plan. Above all, peace was to be restored in Coburg; constitutionalism preserved there, and the jarring interests honestly reconciled. The task was hard, but I succeeded so well that the storms of eighteen 'forty-eight left us unharmed. To do that I had to put aside a whole ministry, and to break with the bureaucratic aristocracy. Every change made in so small a state is felt as an affair of persons rather than of inevitable policy. To this hour there remains the coldness against me of many members of these offended families. In a lower rank, also, the noisy demagogues, sent back into the quiet of their families, deplored their lost importance, and could not forgive the constitutional duke by whom it was taken from them. They kept up in a smaller way their trade of fomenting irritations, and thus partly they still influence the poorest. But the poorest class is prejudiced against me by a more important accident of my position. My father and my predecessors having absolute command of the revenues, were the ostensible and immediate benefactors in all cases of public expenditure from which the poor derived benefit. They were looked up to for the direct support of public undertakings where now there is interposed between the duke and the people a constitutional ministry; every

public gift has to be countersigned by a minister, and every do it must be accounted for. For this reason, in a small country, if the ruler happens to be benevolent and active, the patriarchal system is, on the whole, best; but all depends, be it observed, upon the ruler's character.

In Gotha, for a little time, I left things as I found them. But the difficulty of applying a different rule to two neighbouring districts became felt, and I earnestly wished also to bring the ministry of Gotha into harmony with right political principles. I met with a settled opposition from the ministry, the host of officials, and even a majority of the townspeople of Gotha. The nobility at once set me down for its worst enemy, and the saying was current that in the duchy of Gotha there was but one democrat—the duke. I expressed my constitutional ideas at the opening of the Diet in 'forty-six, and raised so general a cry that nothing for the moment could be done. With deep sorrow I foresaw the coming political storms in Germany, and laboured among high and low to explain that wholesome reforms are to be made only in time of peace. I was only the more bitterly opposed.

More physical pleasures were too exclusively indulged in. I tried to awaken in Gotha a more intellectual life, with only partial success. Many took it ill that in an open meeting, where weekly papers were volunteered on scientific questions, I myself read rather a long paper on Psychology and Anthropology.

I went to Berlin in January, 'forty-eight, and family affairs carried me thence to England, expectant of the impending troubles. When the French government fell I was in England, and travelling back home by day and night, came at the right hour into Gotha, where, by proclamation and amnesty, issued on the very night of my arrival, I quieted a people that was claiming of me, by way of revolution, what, during the past four years, it had refused to let me give them in the way of peace. We outlived the dangers of that time; but I stood, for months, literally alone. The official world was paralysed; well-meaning folks were dumb. But my personal influence being allowed to suffice, we ended in festival the revolutionary days, and men knew then or cared so little what they rejoiced about, that communities afterwards came to me for lease of the chases that had been made wholly over to them. The cries of the day died out of hearing, every man looked to his own provincial interests, and in a few months I and a few persons of like opinions were the only men in Gotha with minds really active in a patriotic German sense. The wide German popularity of the war in Schleswig was not enjoyed by it in Gotha. I, as its soldier, was received more coldly in my own Gotha than in any other town through which we passed. There remains in Gotha the same indifference to German interests, and for my own devotion to them since eighteen 'fifty, I have not had the good will of my people.

We have in Gotha three groups of the population: 1. Nobles, state pensioners, &c.; 2. The well-to-do citizens, with the whole body of the bureaucracy; 3. The smaller mechanics, and the people here, as elsewhere whose, condition is not one easily to give content.

Group one sees in me the personification of the revolutionary work of 'forty-eight, and makes me answerable where it had only itself to thank. It cannot forgive any abolitions of bedchamber lords and pages; that the court, which is my house, is open to every one whom, for his worth or in obedience to usage, I think proper to invite. It offends them, also, that I do not claim divine right for my actions.

Group two includes what are called the modern liberals, and many of these liberals who will make no sacrifice for their cause. On this group I should be able to place my chief reliance, but I cannot. The old prince, whom men could put to their private uses when they got his ear, is gone, and they are referred to a responsible ministry, which they must propitiate but cannot bribe, for they must propitiate the duke also who keeps personal watch and check over affairs; so there is every difficulty put in the way of family considerations and the public following of private wishes. The duke is too impartial to be popular, especially where, as in all small capitals, men and women are split into many antagonistic cliques.

Group three would like me were I hostile to groups one and two, but it has little regard for a liberality that gives no unjust advantage to the poorer democrat over his richer neighbour.

In every one of the three groups I have many isolated friends who form no phalanx of supporters, and who are too sensible to waste much time in noisy argument. These usually, when they hear detraction, will, for comfort's sake, pass it by on the other side. So the detraction and the gossip have their way in Gotha. I am not proud enough to be indifferent to this, common failing as it is among our good Germans; but I think I have so far done my duty that I may set in my own favour the good word of a patriot against the declamation of a tavern politician. As to free opinion, I frankly say that while I will be accessible to every honest word addressed to me with a true motive, I will always enforce the laws against unjust judgments and false, injurious assertions. But there is much slanderous chatter that no law can touch, among which I reckon the too common assumption that the Diet of Gotha is packed with officials. Study the list of deputies and see the contrary; though it is true that where there is no right public interest in the elections the best public representatives are hardly to be found.

Although I am thus isolated in my own land I do not part myself from the people. I believe that without the sympathies of the people no man can do them solid service. It is detestable to cultivate the vulgar arts of popularity; without them, between a people and its leader there should be mutual trust, mutual kindness of interpretation, and the people that would make

the work of its leader fruitful for its own good should itself protect his name from aspersion, and support his efforts with a wholesome strength of opinion.

For good and for bad there are, in fewer words, the whole contents of the yellow pamphlet that has jaundiced many a high aristocratic German eye, royal and noble, and that should interest England, with its curious photograph of the political condition of the Germans; for the people of Gotha are but as the people of Vienna or Berlin. It should interest England also in her Majesty's most excellent brother-in-law, and make us all wish the day long distant when Prince Alfred succeeds to his ducal throne.

AN UNREPORTED SPEECH.

I WISH with all my heart that some gentleman would "get up in his place in parliament" when next it meets, and, having caught the Speaker's eye, would direct that brilliant orb towards certain dark spots in the social life of the present day, certain blemishes in our civilisation which decidedly want looking to:—Sir, he might say, calling attention at once to one of the very worst of these blemishes, I wish to say a few words on the subject of music. I think that anything, be it an art, a science, or what not, occupying so high a social position, and possessing so great a social influence among us as music undoubtedly does, I consider, I say, that any such thing is a fit and appropriate subject to claim the attention of this honourable House, and that it is in no wise derogatory to this House that such a subject should be brought before it. Sir, there is this great difference between music and other arts—and it is just this difference which makes it peculiarly necessary to legislate for it—music does not wait till it is wanted, but, on the contrary, comes to us self-invited, and often unsought. Let me make myself better understood. In the case of literature, it will be obvious to every one I am addressing that a book does not force itself upon us, it remains on the book-shelves till we go, knowing what we are doing, and take it down and read it. It does not come out of the library and bellow its contents in our ears whether we like it or not. Except on the rare occasions—for which I would also legislate—when a lady or gentleman volunteers to read his own or somebody else's poem aloud, except in this rare instance, literature lets us entirely alone, and it is our own doing if we are troubled or amused by it. With regard, again, to painting, drawing, and sculpture, the same observations apply which I have just made on the subject of literature. We go to the Royal Academy or some other exhibition, or to the Louvre, the National or Vernon Galleries, if we want to see the pictures. The pictures do not detach themselves from the walls and follow us about the streets, or pursue us into the retirement of home. It is true that a friend will occasionally compel us to look over a

portfolio of drawings, but this does not happen often after all.

But, sir, in the case of music, we find ourselves altogether in a different position. While, as I have pointed out, literature and art both wait till we seek them, and let us alone if we let them alone, music is altogether of a less retiring character, comes to us often uninvited, often continues with us unsolicited, and sometimes even refuses to withdraw its beneficent influences when directly requested to do so. As to its coming to us uninvited, I suppose there is no member of this House who cannot remember many occasions when he has found himself in a society where music has come upon him—if I may so speak—without his having any voice in the matter. He has been taking a hand at whist, we will say, and has been getting on successfully, he has a good knowledge of his partner's cards, and can make one or two shrewd surmises as to his adversary's trumps—suddenly the first notes of a symphony make themselves heard, and in a very short time he begins to find himself all abroad; his partner's trumps and his adversary's become mixed up in his mind, and his enjoyment of the game is over. I give this trifling example of the case I have asserted, that music often comes to us uninvited. That it frequently remains with us unsolicited is equally easy to prove. It is not unfrequently the case that a lady or gentleman—and it must be owned that gentlemen, when they do sit down to the piano, most often offend in this sort—it is frequently the case, I say, that an individual will establish himself on the music-stool and will remain wedded to that piece of furniture long after his music has ceased to give pleasure. One thing will remind him of another, and from regular musical performances such as opera selections and well-known morsels, he will get on to a "little thing that he picked up among the peasants in Calabria," or "a favourite national air in Hungary," till at last one gets to wish that he had never visited either of these countries, and to be so impatient of his musical memory as to wish that on the whole it were a little less retentive.

It is not, however, to such disfigurements of our social system as these that it is necessary I should direct the attention of this House. Distressing as these things are, we can scarcely interfere in cases of so essentially private a nature. But what I do wish to lay before this House (as a matter in which it ought undoubtedly to act, and that with as little delay as may be) is the state of the case with regard to what may be called our public music—the music which not only, as I have before said, comes to us uninvited, and remains with us unsolicited, but declines to leave us when distinctly requested to do so. Sir, I am well aware that there are many members present here to-night who would be inclined to correct me at this point, and who would remind me that it has been established by law that any musician playing upon any instrument in the public street, may be requested to move out of hearing, and is under the necessity, when

so requested, of complying forthwith with the injunction. I am quite conscious that this is indeed the state of the law, but what I contend is, that this law does not practically affect the state of things of which I complain. To what purpose is it that one musician should be removed from before my house, when in the course of a few minutes his place is filled by another? Consider, too, the loss of temper that ensues after a row with one of these men—and they will seldom go without a row; consider how a man is unfitted for his work, and thrown out of cue by a disturbance of this sort. There are some *quiet* streets in London where ten or twelve of these musicians will turn up in the course of a single day; why, one need keep a servant (and a man-servant, too) on purpose to drive them away. The notions of these musicians, again, on the subject of distance, and their idea of being “out of hearing,” are generally widely different from those of the person they are annoying, and their removal from the step before one’s own house has generally to be followed by at least two subsequent sallies to drive them away from No. 20 (five doors farther up), or even 25, where they are still distinctly audible.

Now, the question for which I have been paving the way all this time is simply this: Why should we have street musicians at all? Why should not a clean sweep be made of the whole organ and hurdy-gurdy tribe, and, at the same time, considerable restrictions be laid on the performances of the brass and other bands by which our streets are frequented? What do we want with organs? When the professional poet comes in between Brutus and Cassius, at the end of the celebrated quarrel scene between them, Cassius asks with pardonable irritability, “What do the wars do with these jiggling fools?” Substituting “the streets” for “the wars” in the above quotation, may we not make the same inquiry with regard to our street musicians? They do us no good, they give us no pleasure, they interfere with our occupation, they chafe our nerves; what do we want with them?

I am afraid the answer to this question is ready on the lips of those to whom it is addressed: You are an exceptional person; you belong to a class so small that it cannot reasonably be legislated for. The great mass of workers in this town are, by the localities in which their professional avocations are conducted, safe from the annoyance you complain of. The lawyer in the Temple, the judge in Westminster Hall, the merchant in a City court or on ‘Change, is safe from organs, and those men whose work is carried on in offices, are the great important classes of society for whom alone it is needful to legislate. You, the student, who carry on your profession in your own house, are altogether an exceptional person, whom really we cannot stay to consider. You must get on as well as you can.

But, I would contend, that in weighing the importance of any particular class, the test of numbers is not the only test to be applied, but that quality should be considered as well as, or

perhaps even more than, quantity; and I would also contend that the class who suffer under the nuisance with which we are concerned, is by no means so small a one as might at first be imagined. The writer, the artist, the calculator, the comparative anatomist, the clergyman composing his sermon, the scientific man his treatise, surely the class of which such individuals as these form the component parts, is scarcely a small, and still less an unimportant one.

And who are the people who would oppose these? Who are the people who wish the organ nuisance to remain as it is—to whom “Bob Ridley” is a solace, and “Dixie’s Land” a refreshment? They may exceed us in numbers, but certainly not outweigh us in importance. The servant-maids, the wives and children of some members of the lower middle classes. These are all, for how many are there who, not ranking among the studious classes mentioned above, are yet, from ill-health or nervousness, almost equally disturbed by the organ nuisance. To those in trouble of mind or pain of body, to the neuralgic, to those who strive, for the time, perhaps ineffectually, with their labour, the music made by the organ-grinder amounts to something little less than a torment.

Let us, as much as possible, have our music when we want it and where we want it. There is no reason whatever why the supply of this delightful recreation should be stopped; simply it should run in another channel. In Paris an excellent band plays in the afternoon in the Palais Royal, the central square of the French capital; why should not this be the case with us? Why not have a band every afternoon in the middle of Trafalgar-square. Or if it should be argued, and with some show of reason, that the hideous objects dotted about that ghastly enclosure would so distress the eyes of those who came to listen to the band that they could derive no pleasure from it, a good place might be found in St. James’s Park, where the music would be an offence to no one, and would give a vast deal of pleasure to all sorts of people.

Sir, I have it upon the evidence of credible witnesses that their labours are frequently impeded, and that a considerable loss of time, and consequently of emolument, has been occasioned to them by the organ nuisance. We are all well acquainted with the case of a gentleman distinguished by his powers as a calculator, and by a remarkable invention in connexion with what I may call the science of numbers. We all know what this gentleman has suffered through the annoyance of itinerant musicians. That gentleman’s name has become almost proverbial as identified with the organ nuisance. His onslaughts on the organ-grinders have been numerous and terrific. At the very first click of “Bob Ridley” he is out upon them from his ambush, and then they may give themselves up for lost. But this distinguished personage does not stand alone in the conflict. I am told by gentlemen in the literary world, and that of art, that they often lose a day’s work, owing to the excess of irritability into which they are thrown by a

severe attack of "Beautiful Star" early in their day's work. Whatever people may think, it is *not* a good preparation for a day of intellectual labour to rush out into the street, after being told by your maid-servant that "the Frenchman don't seem to understand that he's to go," and threaten a grinning Italian with a policeman. The performance of this feat half a dozen times in the course of a morning lays in a stock of bad blood, which is apt, during the remainder of the day, to get into the brain and clog the ideas which might otherwise have flowed with some degree of smoothness to the pen's nib, or the pencil's point. A day's work spoilt not uncommonly interferes with a man's capacity for enjoying the evening which ensues, and so a day that might have been a profitable and a pleasant one, is doubly lost.

Sir, I have now said, not all that *might* be said on this topic, but enough, I trust, to prove that the evil for whose extermination I am pleading is not a trivial or unimportant one. I might have enlarged at greater length on the troubles of those for whom "music hath not always charms." I might have described their sufferings more minutely, but to have done so would only have been to heap together minute points of evidence when the great fact to be demonstrated was already proved. The organs are a nuisance—they interrupt labour, they interfere with comfort—in Heaven's name let us be rid of them.

With this earnest cry, I would conclude that speech which, had I the luck to be an M.P., and to get as much as a wink of the Speaker's eye, I would assuredly let fly at him. I appeal to the large class whose interests I am advocating, whether in this torrent of eloquence I have outstepped the boundaries of truth and justice? I appeal to all scientific and literary characters, to all calculators, arithmeticians, mathematicians, to all cultivators of the fine arts, to hard readers, to the nervous lastly, and the sickly, whether I have been too hard on the organ-grinding fraternity? I believe that every member of every one of these classes will cordially endorse everything I have said. Why, even as I write these last words sitting in Lumbago-terrace, the strains of a band playing before the houses in Sciatica-row, a considerable distance off, reach me quite audibly. The tune is the "Last Rose of Summer," and for the last half-hour this has been preceded by other dirges of a like nature. Between each of these there has been a pause just long enough to make me hope that the musical entertainment was over. How can a man write under such circumstances? His pen is paralysed, and the words of the song with which these artists are dealing, ring in his ears. What, I ask, *can* a man do under these circumstances? Sciatica-row is too far off for me to send my servant to order those wretches off, and even if she were to go they would only move a little farther, and I should still hear that disgusting trombone pumping away at the solemn passages. No, I must either bear it, or—no, I

will *not* bear it, I will go out just as I am and hunt those men out of Sciatica-row, if it takes me the whole morning; and a nice state I shall be in when I come back for the remainder of my day's work.

AT THE ROADSIDE.

I, FOR a time, have left behind
The giant-city with its sin,
And here, secure from rain or wind,
I sit at ease within mine inn;
The dew lies bright on garden dowers
Below this little quiet room,
Beyond, the sunshine strikes the showers,
From gloom to gold, from gold to gloom.
Pleasant it is to linger here,
And watch the workings of the soil,
To taste the pleasant country cheer,
And seem so far away from toil,
Far from the busy human flock,
To feel the pauses of the brain
Filled by the sound of yonder clock,
And by the tinkling of the rain.
The rough old pictures on the walls,
The shining pewter sound and good;
The straggling postman when he calls,
Confirm my dim and dreamful mood;
The waiting-maid, fair, fresh, and free,
Might cause a softer heart to burn;
But, is it appetite or she,
That cooks my dinners to a turn?
And chief, mine host! with flaxen poll,
An ale-tanned wight, at fifty sound;
I wot, a better-envied soul,
Dwells not for seventy miles around.
He is the Delphos of the place,
His calm predictions cannot fail;
A talking host, whose very face
Diffuses politics and ale.
So here I sit within mine inn,
Secure to-day from fortune's frown,
The rain without, the calm within
Are something sweeter than the town;
This pleasant room, that changeful sky,
The dreamful peace of brain and heart,
Have left a fresher sense, that I
Shall take to town when I depart.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CIRCUS LIFE.

HAVING been engaged in a large Circus, I think I can enlighten the public, who are said to delight in obtaining a glimpse behind the scenes, about the ground and lofty tumbling, and the other extraordinary novelties which are to be seen in that wonderful institution "The Imperial British Hippodrome," as the bills now call the Circus. Clever tumblers, professors of the single and double trapeze, riders of trick acts, exhibitors of trained ponies, Shakespearean jesters, and champion vaulters of the world; the glittering paraphernalia incidental to the gorgeous spectacle of The Camp of the Cloth of Gold, or The Sprites of the Silver Shower; or the tortuous pyramidal feats of the dusky children of the desert; have not been invented quite at a moment's notice, but have grown to perfection by slow degrees and by means of incessant prac-

tice on the sawdust. The Circus is so entirely changed from what it was some thirty or forty years ago, as to be almost a new institution to those who recollect the little mountebank parties that used to pay an annual visit to the village green, and delight the rustic sightseers of agricultural districts by giving away an occasional fat pig.

There was nothing in those times to be compared to CHIRPER'S CIRCUS, in which I myself have really served. The huge travelling Circus of our day, such a one as that of the Brothers Chirper, may be looked upon as a colony, and the capital requisite to carry on a profitable business may be guessed from the fact, that about sixty horses are required to work a large concern, besides a den of lions, a brace of camels, and a tumbling elephant or two, to say nothing of half a dozen ostriches, a performing mule, a dancing bull, and a real live deer with movable horns! Then, in addition to a corps of about thirty male and female performers, including of course the inevitable Lion King or Queen, and no end of acrobats, voltigeurs, and Amazons, there must be a stud-groom, or "master of the horse" (Circus people delight in fine language), and under him a score of stablemen. Then, there must be a tent-master and tenters, besides the agent in advance, the members of the brass band, the pair of bill-stickers, and the many other wonderfully nondescript hangers-on, who contrive to extract a living out of the concern. While out "tenting," as it is called, some ambitious showmen, not contented with the usual slow style of getting on, and to obtain additional notoriety, now indulge in a locomotive to drag them from town to town: thus making their grand entrée, preceded by what they term a real fiery dragon.

The Messrs. Chirper were, so to speak, born showmen, as they came into the world at Greenwich Fair, and started in life with an exhibition of white mice. They travelled the country with all kinds of shows, growing from small to large, until now they are wealthy men, with a bank account, and the largest Circus on the road. Their "Magic Ring," as they have christened it, is on a gigantic scale, having all sorts of clever people attached, to minister to the amusement of its patrons, and it dispenses daily bread-and-butter to a party of one hundred and fifty-seven men, women, and children—if the young of show-folks ever are children—who are dependent on it. The Brothers Chirper, like most showmen, are pleasant fellows, not overburdened with the learning of the schools, but crammed to repletion with the sterner acquirements of dear-bought experience of men and manners. Like all their class, the brothers are fond of diamonds—one of them, showman-like, wears a hoop of brilliants that cost three hundred pounds. Why is it, I have often wondered, that all showmen are fond of diamonds? The show-folk are altogether a peculiar race, and, like the fishermen of our sea-coasts, are not prone to intermarry with other classes. I could

not help noting that in our Circus company, forty-two of the persons engaged, were related by blood or marriage to the brothers.

The behind the scenes of Circus-dom is a quaint enough region, and of course a contrast to the "front." There is always a slight soupçon of that peculiar zoological aroma indicative of the king of the forest. A great fire of coke burns brightly in a large iron funnel, placed in the centre of the vacant space (the extempore green-room); at the curtained door, where the company enter the ring; and round it, there loiters a crowd of performers, grooms, &c. Some of them have just made their exit from the sawdust; others are making ready to go in. The fire is of great use for ventilating purposes, for there is always uppermost a strong perfume of damp sawdust, wet litter, and horse-breath, with a faint indication of bad drainage and other horrors. The scene at the fire is motley enough. The lazy black servant, habited in the gorgeous oriental robe, is attentively chalking the pumps of Mademoiselle Aurelia, the tight-rope dancer and "ascensionist," who is adjusting her pink skirts preparatory to taking her "turn." A medical student is making hot love to Madame Francatelli, the lady-devil rider, who, as the bills tell us, "has been clothed with fame in all the capitals of Europe and Russia." The funny gentleman with the nodding queue, or tail-piece, as he calls it, looking waggishly over his whitened scalp, his nose buried in a pint of half-and-half, is one of the seven great clowns of the establishment—indeed, he is our leader—and motley is certainly his only wear, or, to borrow again from the bill, it is "that oracle of pungent satire, Mr. Henry White, surnamed the Modern Touchstone." One can easily surmise that Mr. White must have just given birth to something new in the joke line, and, in apt confirmation of my opinion, he offers the ring-master (that grand looking personage, elaborately got up as a field-marshal, who is of course in the confidence of the clown) the reversion of the pewter pot. All round the fiery furnace, in concentric rings, "the strength of the establishment" crowd for warmth, and are only at intervals disturbed in their banter by the manager's warning bell, or the more than ordinary bursts of laughter evoked by myself or some other clown. In front, all is ablaze with light and gaudy calico, and each acrobat and horseman seems to excel his neighbour in his leaps and bounds. The three hours of performance fly rapidly away, as artist after artist bounds into the ring. Trick acts, feats on the trapeze, revolving corkscrews, descending mercuries, in short, all the varied and puzzling acts of contortion incidental to the modern Circus are exhibited with a grace and dexterity, and with a firmness of nerve, which never fail to astonish.

All is couleur de rose at night—an applauding audience and smiling performers make the work go off with spirit. In the daytime, the circus is dark, cold, and miserable; the fiery furnace has been carried into the centre of the ring, and most of the corps are again at work, practising;

for it is only by hard practice that the agility of the acrobats and horsemen can be kept up. Miss Caroline Crockett (name in the bill, Mdle. Salvadori de Medici) is being put through a new act by her uncle. She is dressed in a short ballet skirt, and has on a pair of light canvas shoes. She takes the various leaps with wonderful precision, and only once does she miss her "tip." For a long hour, until both horse and lady show signs of great fatigue, she is kept at her lesson; and at night the policy of this rehearsal is apparent, for none of the company are rewarded with louder plaudits than Mdle. de Medici. In various quiet places of the ring, little boys are trying who can twist himself into the most fantastic shapes; their fathers, or the persons to whom they are apprenticed, superintending their tumbling, and sometimes joining in it. In another corner, Professor de Bondirini is practising his three sons for their drawing-room entertainment. One of them is only four years of age; he is the little fellow that comes on as a clown, and has so many oranges and sixpences thrown him. Already, he can tumble like a ten-year old; he made his debut two years ago as Tom Thumb, and has performed all sorts of business—from Cora's child, to being baked in a pie for the clown's dinner.

How knowingly Tom Hughes glides down that rope, descending in slow time, whirling round and round. He is an ugly-looking fellow just now: "poek-pitted," and badly dressed; but at night with his "air" plastered with grease, and his clean white tights and close-fitting jacket, he will look graceful enough, appearing in the bills as the descending Mercury. Now is the time to find out the secrets of the prison-house; the face of that pale-looking youth in the rather fast Tweed suit haunts you no doubt—no wonder; that is the *lady* who has been creating all the winter a great sensation. This wonderful feat of a man passing for many years as a handsome woman, although a great fact of Circus life, has never yet been publicly known. Neither is it publicly known that most of our best equestrians are Irishmen; all the great names familiar to the ring are Milesian in their sound, and the manners and speech of their possessors smack of the Emerald Isle. My own friend, the German Hercules, Herr Strasburg, is a Connemara man, and was picked up originally by a travelling Circus proprietor, who saw his great strength, and knew what, by a little art, could be made of it.

Let me now speak of the art of getting up "wheezes," as the clown's jokes are called. It is a very simple affair. In the scenes to which I act as clown, I arrange my little patter with the ring-master. If I go in with Miss Caroline, I tell him first, that I will do the names of the streets; he takes his cue from that, and asks me some trifling question which brings out the names of all the principal streets in the town. Thus: a desponding person ought to live in *Hope-street*, sir; a thief should have his house in *Steel's-place*; a lady who is fond of flowers should live in *Rose-street*; a humorist in *Me-*

rilies-court, and so on. Much of what is said, however, is arranged on the spur of the moment; the clown gives the ring-master his cue as they walk round following the horse; and at the next pause—there are at least two pauses to an act of horsemanship, for each scene is divided, so to speak, into an exordium, an argument, and a peroration—the clown flies off in a verse or two of poetry about

What are lovely woman's sparkling eyes
Compared to Bagot's mutton-pies?

or,

Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled,
Scots wham Bruce has often led;
If you want to fit your head,
Rush to Ross the hatter's.

At rehearsals there is usually a great consumption of beer, and any quantity of professional slang, with some talk about last Sunday's dinner, and speculation about roast-pork for next Sunday. As to Blondin, or Léotard, all the men in the place, according to their own idea, are quite equal to him; and it is generally true that our Circus acrobats could walk on a tight-rope at any height if, as they say, they had the head-piece for it—it is all a matter of nerve. There have been far greater men in the profession than either Blondin or Léotard. The greatest I take to have been a pantomimist and acrobat—a professional of the far-back ancient time, who performed for love. The story is told by Herodotus. A certain king wishing to get his daughter married, several young princes disputed for the honour of her hand. One of them appeared to be a marvellous proficient in the pantomimic art. In his enthusiasm and desire to astonish the princess he outdid himself; for, after having represented all manner of passions with his hands, he stood upon his head and expressed his tenderness and despair in the most affecting manner by the movement of his legs.

It was lately mentioned at a "crownner's quest," that in seven months there had been no fewer than seven violent deaths among acrobatic performers in the three kingdoms. But what of all that? The never-ending cry still resounds from all the shows of the country, "Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen, this is the best booth in all the fair!" And accordingly on all sides there is a crowd of "talent" ready to feed the market; there is strong competition for employment even among acrobats and mountebanks. One man will stand against a board and allow a companion to surround him on all sides with naked daggers flung from a distance. Has not Mr. James Cooke written to the *Era* that he has "performed the astounding feat of throwing a somersault four times in the air before reaching the ground;" and is it not the life ambition of Signor Jerome Mascaroni to earn money by imitating the ape? Another man will balance himself, head downward, on a pole thirty feet high, and in that position drain a bumper to the health of the audience. Somehow, the physical culture and nerve requisite for such performances are more than ever abundant; for ten

shillings a night, plenty of men can be had who will risk their lives ten times.

Many young and old folks imagine that the clown who writhes so comically under the lash of the ring-master, and who dives without introduction among the people in the pit, and whose whole existence seems one round of jokes and heads-over-heels, and an occasional personal "turn," is a merry fellow, happy as the day is long. I know better. I know one Circus clown yet living, and not yet an old man, whose countenance could, and still does, set the audience and the actors, down to the very sawdust-raker, in a roar. Poor fellow! Once upon a time when his duties called him to the Circus, his only son, a lad of seven, was lying on his death-bed. He was left in charge of his sister, a girl of ten. Before his first entry into the ring for the evening, he came to me in tears. "Oh, Joe, I've got to be funny to-night, and my boy, my dear Willy, dying all the while! And yet I must go in." While we talked, the bell rang for his entry, and in he went, amid the roars of a crowded house. After a short interval he had again to appear; but, in that interval, the servant of the lodging-house brought word that Willy was dead. My poor friend was nearly distracted; yet the inevitable bell rang again, and he went in once more. The newspaper next day said that he had excelled himself. So he had.

There is one remarkable point of Circus economy, worth thinking of. How is it that we never find in the bills of the National Hippodrome, such announcements as we find frequently in the bills of the theatres? For instance, we never find that the Courier of St. Petersburg is to be performed by "a young gentleman, his first appearance on horseback;" or that "Miss Cora Montessor will make her début on the corde élastique." No. Circus people never make "first appearances," in the common sense of the term; they are indigenous to the sawdust, as their fathers and mothers were before them. They must be all bred to the work. The artists of the Circus, in most instances, fulfil a long bondage of gratuitous labour—fourteen years generally, and in some cases twenty-one. Their fathers and mothers being in "the profession" before them, they commence their studies at perhaps two years of age. I have seen a score or two of tiny tumblers hard at work at that tender period of existence. There is no going into the Circus without preparation. On the stage of a Theatre, an ignorant pretender who knows nothing of the passions, may pretend to embody them, every one, for me (though I know better), without hurting himself. Let him make as free with a horse as with King Lear, and he will find his collar-bone the worse for it.

Consequently, all Circus people must work hard and long. How hard they work to be sure! But then, as an old acrobat once said to me, "it is practice as does it; once at it, they daren't stop, but must go on till the end." And so the child becomes father to the man, and the infant

Romeo in due time swells into the great Professor Montagu de Capulet, who, as a matter of course, exhibits his glittering spangles before all the crowned heads of Europe. The acrobatic child is quick to learn, for all his faculties are preternaturally shaped by rubbing against those about him. When the children of society are at school he is drawing money to "the concern," and can pick up pins with the corners of his eyes as he bends back and over, and can throw fore springs, head springs, and lion leaps; can, in short, do a hundred odd things to earn applause and money. It is no joke to rehearse with bodily hard work all day, and then work at night. I have had to change my dress thirteen times in the course of a night, because, when not otherwise engaged, I had to dress in a smart uniform and stand at the entrance way, to be ready to hold balloons, garters, poles, whatever else was required. All who enter a Circus are engaged for "general utility."

In the summer-time we go a "tenting." That is the word now in use among Circus people to describe their mode of doing business in the country. It is an improvement on the old mountebanking system. Tenting continues from about April to October, and it involves a great amount of travelling—the whole process partaking more or less (especially when business is good) of a holiday character, but it is not, of course, all play even to the curious nomadic race who are engaged in it, and who are undoubtedly its most successful professors.

The system of working is very simple. A large tent, generally about a hundred and twenty feet in diameter, having been procured, and the various officials being well trained in their business, the work of the summer can at once begin. During the winter, a route, which will occupy a month or two to travel, has been mapped out, and about a fortnight before the town season has been brought to a close, "the agent in advance," or *go-a-head*, as he is now called—a gentleman whose salary and expenses for travelling will cost "the concern" about twelve pounds a week—accompanied by a bill-sticker, starts off in advance of the troupe. His duties are to engage suitable ground for the encampment, stalls for the horses, and to "wake up" the natives with a display of gaudy bills stuck up at all the points of vantage along the route. It is also part of the business of this functionary to talk the concern he represents into notoriety; he must bounce at the various taverns at which he stops about the magnitude of the stud, the beauty of the animals, the ability of the company, and the immense "business" they have always done on their tenting tours.

The company and Circus "traps"—i.e. properties of all kinds fixed up in a score of huge waggons—start, perhaps, about six o'clock in the morning, according to the distance to be gone over, which, on the average of the season, may be twelve miles a day. Waggon after waggon defiles from the ground, till all are gone: the band carriage, gaudily decorated, containing the

musicians; the great cage, with its lions; the black servant follows with his herd of camels; then come the handsome living-carriages of the "proprietors," the wife or daughter preparing breakfast as they trot over the ground. The acting manager dashes along, last of all, in a Chinese pavilion, drawn by a pair of dwarf horses; and all along the route there are congregated groups of the discerning public, who stare, open-mouthed, and wonder.

Arriving at their destination, the performers start off to procure lodgings and obtain breakfast. This is not so easy a matter as may be supposed; many good people having very hearty prejudice against the show folk. Breakfast being satisfactorily accomplished, it is time for the company to get themselves "made up" for the grand parade, which is generally fixed for one o'clock, when the corps of performers, and all the auxiliaries who can be pressed into service, in their gayest character dresses, preceded by the band, and accompanied by the den of lions and other zoological phenomena, march in procession through the town and its neighbourhood. The period occupied by the procession allows the tent-master to have the tent put up, to superintend the placing of seats and the hanging of lamps, so that, by two o'clock, the place may be ready for the reception of company. Red-tapists would stare in horror at the celerity with which a Circus tent rises on the village green. The place is no sooner fixed upon than two or three nondescript-looking men—those oddmen one always finds so plentiful about a Circus, who can do anything, from looking the part of Bluebeard in a pantomime to shoeing a horse—rush with pick and hammer, and drive a short central stake into the ground, to which is affixed one end of a long measuring tape, and round and round the ground this tape is carried, the man at the outer end leaving a stake at certain distances; another man gets these stakes hammered into the ground to serve as staples for the canvas, whilst nearer the ring another row of pillars arise to support the roof. In the grand centre stands the great pole, and round it is cut out of the turf the magic ring, or arena, for the combined army of acrobats, horsemen, ascensionists, lion-tamers, clowns, &c. All is got ready in little more than an hour: performing tent, dressing tent, money tent, and every other accessory.

On the return of the company from parade, escorted by those who are to form the spectators, the performance at once begins, and is carried on with great rapidity for an hour and a half. After the company has been dismissed, the performers have time to dine and take tea—a most welcome refreshment, for, at seven o'clock, all hands must again muster for the evening's performance, which is longer and more elaborate than that given in the morning. So soon as the last chords of "God save the Queen" have died away, the tent is "struck" and packed up ready for another day's march, and the lingering crowd having gradually dispersed, all is quiet. After work is over the manager and his chief aides will

have their pint of beer and their pipe at the inn. The acting manager settles up all the bills—for ground-money, for board and lodging, for the horses, and for all sundries supplied to the concern. Some of the tradesmen of the place will join the group, and there is no end of gossip and tobacco reek in the best parlour of the Cock and Trumpet. This pleasant dissipation is but of brief duration, however, for the showman's motto must be "Early to bed and early to rise," for next morning's journey must be duly accomplished.

The "parade," or grand entrée, which always takes place in each town, is the cause of what may be called "a profound sensation," especially if the day be a genial one. Then the company shine out resplendent in tinsel and gold, and spangles and feathers, and glass and zinc diamonds. There are, besides, crowns and tiaras, and rich silk and satin dresses. In the grand entrée, as it is called, all is *couleur de rose*; private woes or sorrows, general to the company, are hidden for the moment, and on blood chargers, curvetting and prancing, decorated with magnificent trappings, may be seen the more prominent heroes and heroines of the heathen mythology. The parade may be described as the peroration advertisement, which puts the key-stone on the gaudy bills that have hitherto served to whet curiosity.

"If Circus be so grand on peaper, what will 't not be in t' real tent, with all them fine animals, and with such real live pretty men and women?" ask the natives of the rural hamlets of each other, and eagerly pay their money to see the fun. The tent is crammed full, and our friend the rustic, who has never before been in a Circus, gazes around him with all his senses open. Suddenly, while John Clodpole is staring round him, a bell rings, and almost simultaneously the horse and the rider appear in the Circus, the latter floating gracefully into the ring like a pinky cloud. And then is summoned Mr. Merryman, who announces the style and title of the lady, and, at once, all present know that she is "Mdlle. Hamletina de Rozenerantz, the floating zephyr rider." The lady being assisted to mount, the fun and wonder begins. Now is John Clodpole in a heaven of delight; wonder, mixed with a little dash of fear, is his prevailing expression. The horse, with arched neck and flashing eye, is flying round the ring at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour, and the nymph of the floating zephyr, standing upon his back, goes through her great "trick act" with a power, if not a grace, that evokes the thunder of the gods most liberally.

Next comes the "turn," as it is called, of Mr. Merryman, who, after asking the ring-master in the gravest possible tones what he "can go for to bring for to fetch for to carry for him?" straightway introduces some most interesting family reminiscences, by asking the audience if they knew his grandfather; upon the simple folks laughing at this, he then launches forth no end of stories about his different relations, from his great-great-grand-

father, down to his nephew's wife's last twins. It is astonishing to see with what gusto everybody laughs at the old Joe Millers. No doubt they are quite new in Rustieshire, and Circus clowns are not famed for their inventive powers.

The modern Touchstone might do better, though. The clowns of the Circus might, if they liked, considerably elevate their art. Our clowns cling too rigidly to the old traditions of the ring. They ought to reform this altogether, and become more than they ever have been "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time," and so satirise the "living manners as they rise."

The clown having finished his "patter," or, in professional phrase, "cracked his wheeze," and the "star-rider of the world" having entered the ring with a humility quite wonderful for one so great, the natives begin to feel astonished indeed. To see "the favourite pupil of the great and mighty Andrew Ducrow, the ne plus ultra of British horsemen," sitting upon the extreme verge of the horse's hind-quarters with neither bridle nor saddle, so lightly that he scarcely seems to touch the animal as it flies round the ring, almost makes the gazer giddy. Again, when he springs suddenly to his feet, and with one foot on the horse's head and the other on his shoulder, sweeps round and round at redoubled speed, the horse and he both leaning into the ring at an angle which seems to threaten that every moment will send them both whirling into the sawdust, the spectators cannot choose but to breathe hard.

In due time all the wonders of the travelling Circus are accomplished, and the wearied performers are glad to rest. It is no easy task this tumbling, tight-roping, and equestrianising, changing dress perhaps three times in the course of the performance, and "going in" for five or six turns. Although the salaries sound largely in the ears of people who do not earn more by their brain and pen, still it must be kept in mind that "mountebanking" is a wearing-out profession, and that a decrepit old age may be yet in store for the "bounding brothers" of the ring, or even for Herr Strongbeard, the "modern Samson," himself.

In the evening, again, perhaps under the smiling beneficence of a grand patronage, there is a second performance, the patronage being most likely obtained through the impudence ("cheek" it is called in the profession) of the acting manager. Unfortunately, there is sometimes a dark side to the picture, and accordingly we find the manager, on the occasions of "bad business," compelled to leave a horse behind for hay, corn, and stabling.

The tenting system is now so well organised, that everything connected with it is conducted with effect and punctuality. Every now and then the "go-a-head" will hark back across the country to consult his employers as to change or prolongation of route. The acting manager of the Circus holds an important position in such consultations, and is also of great use in "working the oracle," as it is called—

that is, in obtaining patronage from the influential people of the neighbourhood, and also in seeing the gentlemen of the press; because a good word from the local newspaper goes a great length with the country people. In this way the colony of show folks passes over a large district of country, selecting with great tact and knowledge the best places at their best time—namely, when there is a fair or other fête in prospect—and hitting on popular watering and sea-bathing places when they are most resorted to. As may be supposed, a large sum of money is carried off from the various halting-places on the route—one hundred pounds a day being frequently taken in the pay-carriage of a travelling Circus. But it is not all gold that glitters, and such sums are, of course, subjected to heavy deductions before they reach the bank account of the proprietor. The salaries and other charges, and the miscellaneous expenses of a large Circus always on the road, are too multifarious to particularise, but they frequently amount to fifty or sixty pounds a day, and the occasional loss of a valuable horse, or the purchase of a couple of lions from Mr. Gimcrack, makes a large hole in the purse. Nevertheless, Circus people do occasionally retire from business with fortunes.

HISTORY OF A YOUNG OLOGY.

It must always be difficult to decide at what precise point in the progress of knowledge a particular branch of science becomes sufficiently important and independent to require consideration as a new science, under some new name, and to deserve recognition as an independent centre of human inquiry, round which facts may be grouped and from which inferences may be drawn. This process, however, has taken place very frequently within the last two centuries, as every one will admit who considers the terrible array of new words recently introduced. As familiar examples, we may mention GEOLOGY and ETHNOLOGY, formerly mere departments of natural history. METEOROLOGY is another example.

Meteorology ranks still as a new science. The first work of any value in reference to it in our language appears to have been a volume of essays, published in 1793, by Dr. Dalton, and it was not till long after this period that regular meteorological observations were made and their meaning investigated by scientific men. At the present time, however, we find the study of meteorology not only pursued in many special observatories, but regarded as essential to every ship's captain; since, not only does the speed of voyages depend on it, but the safety of passengers, crew, and cargo.

The word meteor once meant merely a strange appearance in the sky, but it has for some time included all appearances, ordinary and extraordinary, in any way connected with the air that surrounds us. Thus, the weight or pressure of the air, the warmth or coldness of the air, the strange appearances, under the name of *aurora*, which en-

lighten and cheer the long dark nights of winter in high latitudes, the clouds that float in, or are driven through the air, the winds that drive them, the electric storms that from time to time violently disturb them, the rains that fall, and the dews that are deposited;—all these and many other natural appearances come under the general definition of meteors, and are treated of by meteorology. Observation having shown that the aurora is an indication of certain changes or disturbances in the magnetic currents that traverse earth and air, not unlike those electric disturbances marked by thunder and lightning, the great subject of earth-magnetism is also regarded as a part of meteorology.

In all young sciences a vast multitude of facts have to be acquired and arranged, and their results very carefully tabulated and compared, before any reasonable or trustworthy deduction can be expected. In the case of meteorology these facts can only be recorded by figures, diagrams, and the driest and most uninteresting of accounts. No accurate science is popular until people have begun to generalise from the facts, and then the wider and more inclusive the generalisations, the more interest do they possess. But the early generalisations of meteorology were neither very accurate nor very interesting.

Although, however, we have only very lately been enabled to comprehend and bring into definite shape the facts of this science, which for some half-century have been in course of accumulation, infinite gratitude is due to those who laid the foundation on which we now rear the imposing structure of modern meteorology. The man who foresaw the interest and importance of mere observations of the weather, and not only stored up facts but deduced important conclusions from them, was eminent enough in other respects to justify a short notice before we proceed to give an account of the science of meteorology as it now exists.

Dr. Dalton was one of the hardy race of yeomen, or small landed proprietors, occupying the deep valleys of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, and locally called "statesmen." His parents were Quakers, and he retained throughout his life most of the peculiarities of that sect. In his early life he taught mathematics, first to himself as a pursuit, and afterwards to others as an occupation, varying this employment, however, by occasional farm-labour. When only nineteen years of age he became the principal of a school at Kendal, and, with his brother only to assist him, he managed this establishment for eight years, lecturing occasionally on natural philosophy. In the year 1793 he removed to Manchester, where he resided for the remainder of his long life.

Among Dalton's amusements at this time was that of propounding and answering queries and enigmas that appeared in the periodical publications of the day, and it is interesting to notice that in the year of his removal to Manchester (his age being then twenty-seven) he drew out a query on the subject of the mists

seen in calm evenings over meadows, &c. In the following year appears an answer by himself, giving a clear and satisfactory explanation of a meteorological phenomena then by no means generally understood, and leading to important conclusions. In the same year appeared the first edition of his *Meteorological Essays*, in which he treats with remarkable clearness and knowledge of the barometer, thermometer, and hygrometer; proves the relation of the aurora to magnetism, and puts on record numerous observations on wind, rain, and storms, and the mutual relations of all these phenomena.

In the year 1837 he suffered two attacks of paralysis. He had previously contributed valuable memoirs on various departments of science. His great and best-known work was the establishment of the atomic theory, which must always be regarded as a most important step in chemical science, and one which, more than any other, has brought about accurate knowledge in that department of physics. Dalton died universally respected in the year 1844.

Our atmosphere, he taught, is never still. If it were composed only of that mixture of dry gases which form its principal and essential ingredients and always had an equal temperature over different parts of the earth, it might obtain a position of stable equilibrium and revolve with the earth without relative motion; but this never can be, for the sun's rays heat it irregularly, as different parts of the earth in succession come under their influence, so that currents of heated and cooler air are in incessant circulation. Vapour of water rising from the sea also mingles with the air, and acts as a disturbing cause. Hence arise those alternatives of rain and drought, of calm and tempest, of heat and cold, which have so powerful an influence on all living beings, and above all on man. From age to age, from the very earliest period of which we have any account, these changing and shifting conditions have been the subject of more or less remark, but it is only lately that men have thought of seeking for a rational cause, by carefully observing and recording the exact nature of the changes and the times at which they take place.

To predict changes in the weather, and favourable or unfavourable seasons, with any certainty, was long the work only of the superstitious, the foolish, and the ignorant. But means have been obtained, since Dalton's time, by which many of the most essential changes can be well seen, hours and even days before they come to pass, in any particular spot of sea or land, and the course of great storms is now a matter of as strict calculation as the path of a planet in the heavens. The careful navigator sees a storm coming when there is no little cloud, even of the bigness of a hand; he knows how and when it will reach the place where he is, and what he must do if he would escape from its violence. The day may come when, from data equally exact, we may be informed of the probable weather a still longer time beforehand, but many more observations must be made, and their

meaning understood before this is likely to happen.

There are certain simple and easily understood facts and observations on which modern meteorology rests. First, the air has weight and is highly elastic, and its weight or the pressure that it exercises constantly varies. A happy thought suggested itself to Torricelli, to measure this pressure by balancing against it a column of mercury in an empty tube. He took a tube of strong glass, of considerable length, and filled it with clean mercury, and then inverted it in a basin of mercury. He was surprised to find that the column of mercury always sank till it remained stationary thirty inches or thereabouts above the level of the mercury in the basin. This nearly uniform column of thirty inches, always held up in the tube, he concluded must be exactly equivalent in weight or pressure to the whole amount of the pressure of the air, since there was no air whatever left in the top of the tube, and the only thing that could keep the fluid metal from falling into the basin must be a counteracting and equal weight arising from the body of the air from the earth to its upper limit. But hardly was the experiment made, when it was observed that, in times of wind and rain, the mercury did not stand so high as in time of continued fine weather. Thus the barometer or weight-measurer came to be regarded as a weather-glass; not that it ever can do more than measure the pressure of the air, but because bad weather generally follows the fall, and fair weather the rise of the mercury in the tube.

Used with the anemometer or wind-measurer, which is only a carefully made weather-cock of which the indications are registered, the direction of the wind and the force with which it blows, two other air meters may be compared, and are found to have much relation to each other. The mercury, indeed, quite as invariably sinks when high winds are prevalent as when rainy weather is at hand.

Vapour of water is present in the air at all times, but more in proportion as the air is warmer. Air at all temperatures holds vapour in solution without appearing damp or depositing water, but, as the quantity varies with the heat, there is often a change involving the getting rid of a certain part of the water. To measure the moisture of the air, requires an instrument specially contrived. Such is the hygrometer, or wet-measurer; but that instrument is of no use without observations of temperature, and for this purpose we must have a thermometer or heat-measurer. The old construction of the former instrument was very picturesque, but not very precise. Who does not remember the monk on the mantel-piece, with a cowl which covered his head in the damp, but moved off from it when the air was drier? A more accurate contrivance, based on the same principle, is still occasionally used. The heat-measurer is, as all know, a small tube of glass partly filled with mercury or coloured spirit, of which there is a supply in a bulb at the extremity. When heat is applied

the fluid in the bulb expands, and to occupy a larger space is obliged to force itself somewhat higher in the tube. Cold produces a contrary effect.

There is another equally simple and effectual mode of making observations of the state of the air with regard to moisture. A glass of cold spring-water, or of ice-water, brought into the air on a warm day is soon clouded with pearly drops, which have been obtained from the sudden chilling of the adjacent air by the glass and its contents. The more moist the air the less need is there of having the water extremely cold to produce this effect, and by noticing the exact temperature by the thermometer at which the dew begins to be thrown down, we obtain what is called the dew-point, which in fact marks the condition of the air for moisture. There are other ingenious modes of arriving at the same result with equal or greater accuracy.

Some other uses are made of the thermometer, and it is found that the temperature of the air is constantly varying, not only from hour to hour, but at the same time in different strata of air near the earth. Wherever the sun's rays can reach, the cause is manifest; but it is found by experiment that, in shade and at night, the same thing happens. Heat is radiated through the air, and radiation takes place much more rapidly through a clear than in a cloudy atmosphere. The earth receives heat during the day and parts with it at night. Thus there is another constant source of disturbance in the atmosphere.

Electricity, again, acts a most important part in all that is going on around us. The effect of this agent is generally obscure, always strange, unlike other agents, and sometimes very terrible. Incessantly developed by every change that takes place by evaporation, by all phenomena of life, and by the action of light, its presence and state can generally only be detected by very delicate instruments. The flappings of a small piece of leaf gold become a means to this end; but the telegraph wires afford another almost equal though very disagreeable means of detecting the electric excitement.

When the aurora is seen between the observer and the pole to which he is nearest, there is an amount of magnetic disturbance in the earth and air which is even more widely extended than the fiercest electric storm. Contrivances are not wanting by which this also can be measured and recorded, and the finger of the storm, whether electric or magnetic, now traces its own path on the sheet placed to receive the mark.

The compass-needle is disturbed when the aurora appears, and this connexion of two phenomena apparently so little connected, is one of those discoveries for which we have to thank the modest philosopher whose name we have already connected with this article.

The curious phenomena of snow and hail involve considerations not fitted for discussion here, and explanations that would rather confuse than enlighten the general reader. They are by no means so simple as some of us are in the habit

of fancying. The consideration of weather, again, is an inclusive expression, stating all that we know concerning all the meteors of a country and district, and their mutual bearing on each other—is a matter rather rising out of meteorology than a part of it. But we learn by the observations hitherto made some satisfactory results, proving that what for a long time was regarded as ever shifting and changing is really fixed, and that the climate of a district hardly changes, however the seasons may vary.

These results have not been obtained without enormous labour, and have required the collection of an almost incredible amount of conscientious detail. A series of observations has been continued for ten years at a thousand localities, requiring, of course, at least as many intelligent and instructed persons, and the number of observations in this series amounted to eighty-seven millions. Many arranged series were made at intervals of two hours, day and night, for years, at a number of selected stations, the corresponding observations being regularly taken at the same moment. It is thus only that material can be collected from which sound conclusions are to be based.

One of the most important and valuable of the results of having a continued and minute record of the state of the air, has been the determination of what is called the atmospheric wave, which means an ideal surface in the atmosphere at which the pressure is everywhere the same. If the atmosphere were still and undisturbed, this would be parallel to the earth's surface, and would never vary. Such, however, is by no means the case, the variation being sometimes enormous, rapid and incessant, and strictly marking the conditions of calm and storm in the parts of the earth over which the wave is traced.

Let us conclude with an illustration of the state of this wave on the occasion of the great storm which seriously injured the English and French fleets in the Black Sea on the 14th of November, 1854. This was by no means a local storm, as we shall see by the state of the wave recorded in meteorological observatories, and it serves well to illustrate the nature of meteorological observation. After this storm as many as two hundred and fifty reports were obtained from different stations and compared together.

On the 12th November, 1854, the pressure of the air, which had been low, was enormously high on a line ranging from the west of England into France, reaching almost to the Pyrenees, but at various places east and west of this line the barometer was low. A great undulation of the air was taking place, and the ridge of a commencing wave was in the line here stated. As yet the storm had not commenced; but, before four-and-twenty hours had elapsed, this vast wave had moved towards the east, the north part of the crest having then reached Sweden, while the southern part had advanced far in the Mediterranean. It went through the great cities of Berlin, Dresden, and the southern part having entered the Alps was

lost in their windings. On each side of this crest the indications of storm were very marked.

Still another day elapsed, and the wave had now reached St. Petersburg and Dantzic, while its southern part was close to Vienna and had entered the Adriatic, running down the coast of Dalmatia. On the 15th it was on the Carpathian Mountains, and on the 16th the crest had reached the Black Sea. Beyond that, there were no observatories to mark its progress. The storm took place when the low advancing wave glided over the gloomy waters of the Black Sea, long before the crest made its appearance. The weather is described as having been favourable enough until the fatal atmospheric wave bore down on the spot. Then, indeed, the barometer fell rapidly, but it was too late.

We have said that the high crest so curiously indicated could not be unaccompanied by depression. This commenced and was traceable at a great distance, and, in point of fact, this depression everywhere preceded the advancing wave, while another less considerable followed it. But while at the beginning the difference was small and the result unimportant, in proportion as the wave advanced towards the east, the hollow in advance became greatly deepened, or, in other words, the mercury stood very low indeed. The strength of the storm was felt where the depression reached its minimum—in the Black Sea on the 14th November. At that time the depression had been succeeded by the crest of the wave between St. Petersburg and the Dalmatian coast. The course of this storm, from its first commencement on the shores of the Atlantic till it reached the Black Sea, and the rate at which it was travelling, were matters perfectly within calculation after it had passed over the British islands, and the time of its probable arrival in the Black Sea might have been telegraphed some forty-eight hours in advance.

The wide spread of telegraphic communication has greatly facilitated meteorological observations of importance, and has already allowed useful warning to be given of some great storms advancing in certain directions. The mode in which these storms will advance, the way in which certain storm-winds will veer round, blowing in succession from all points of the compass, but in regular order, and even the duration of the storm, were all more or less calculable.

Our readers may now, perhaps, see something of the use and meaning of that table that appears daily in some of our newspapers, communicating the state of wind and weather at a number of stations at a fixed hour. A glance at this will often show the nature of the advancing weather, and the direction in which it comes. But it requires that all the facts should be considered, as they mutually affect each other, to obtain all the use of this table that it is capable of yielding. Meteorology a few years ago so small and weak that a child could master it, is already becoming strong and almost unwieldy. It now requires a clear head and powerful grasp

of intellect to keep in view the various facts that bear upon any inquiry, and as facts multiply and theories become complex, there cannot be a doubt that the same kind of attention and accuracy, and somewhat similar calculations will be needed for it, as have long been felt necessary in the pursuit of physical astronomy. Meteorology bids fair to be an exact science.

AMERICAN HUMOUR.

THE origin of American humour is a difficult question, and is surrounded by a thorny thicket of theories and doubts.

First, comes an Irish element of humorous exaggeration, brag and fun, with a fondness for that special Irish feature—the *bull*.

Secondly, a Spanish element of pugnacity and conceit, and hatred of negroes, with a strongly developed love of the marvellous.

Thirdly, a German element of homeliness and simplicity, and embracing all stories of German settlers.

Fourthly, an Indian element of ferocity and daring, mingled with self-applauding narratives of hunting-stories and local lies about animals, including especially adventures with snakes and feats with the rifle.

Fifthly, a Puritan element, dry, grave, and chuckling, and embracing all stories of preachers, prayer-meetings, and anti-slavery stories.

Lastly, a special American element arising from the fusion of all these: sobered by German influences; made vivacious by French influences; passionatised by Indian climate; made bragging and chivalrous by Spanish alliances; made dry, sectarian, fervid, by hereditary Puritan feeling; yet in itself neither pure German, French, Spanish, Indian, Puritan, English, Scotch, or Irish—but American, whole and undivided.

About five-and-twenty years since American humour first became really popular and soundly rooted in England. Mrs. Trollope and Marryat heralded its advent. It gained the public ear as soon as the prejudices of the old foolish and lamentable war had died out; it came wrapped in cotton; it came as a new fruit or vegetable to try if there was a market for it; our own old fun was dying out; our new fun was beginning, and there was room for American fun; we tried it and liked it, as we had done oranges after eating apples for hundreds of years. We learned to relish the flavour, though cross-grained people and bitter critical people called it "extravagant," "ridiculous," and most horrible of all to respectable people's ears—*vulgar*. We had so long been taught to think the Americans convicts, rebels, cruel smugglers, slave-drivers, that we scarcely liked at first to retail even their fun. By degrees, like crinoline, hair-powder, and other ephemeral follies, it grew from a luxury into a necessity. Daily conversation wanted it as much as the "dandy" wanted kid gloves, perfumes, and boxes at the opera.

Rice, too, gave it a great impetus. He was

a second-rate American comedian, who had suddenly hit on a new idea. He had studied the droll negro boatman on the wharf at Vicksburg, on the Mississippi, learnt his songs, caught his droll jargon, copied his walk, and borrowed his dances. Negro fun had hitherto been thought dangerous ground—no one had imitated it. Rice tried it, and succeeded. His negro career was one long triumph. Even his imitators became popular. He came over to England, jumped Jim Crow to a pretty tune, and introduced among us our blessing and curse in the shape of negro minstrelsy and American jokes. Of course, his songs were not pure negro; they were not even American songs; they were generally Irish and Scotch tunes, furnished up and rearranged—good old tunes too, not unjustly dug up again, but they were sung in the negro manner, and his dialogue was spiced with American jokes, divested of their provincial shell or rind. At this time, when the New Orleans Picayune was teeming with absurd fun, and offering prizes "for the biggest lie," England was deluged with Yankee jokes—as, for instance:

"There is a man in Nashville, Kentuck," says an American paper, "so enormously tall that he has to get up a ladder to shave himself."

Or,

"There is a man in Memphis, Tennessee," says an American paper, "who is so absent, that the other day he tucked up his wet umbrella in bed and stuck himself up in the corner to dry."

Or,

"There is a farmer in Ohio," says an American paper, "who, learning that skunks lived three hundred years, has just bought one, to see if the report is true. He is 'some pumpkins' on his new purchase."

Half these jokes were old Joe Millers, the last one even going back as far as that primeval joker Heraclitus; but they did very well for "Buncombe," and the Americans are not a reading people, nor does business leave many of them much time to think. About this time the dangers of travelling in America were typified for our amusement in good stories of captains sitting on the safety-valves of steamers; of lady passengers giving whole deck-loads of bacon hams to feed the fires of racing steamers; in stories of explosions, where the captain exerts himself to save only the passengers who haven't paid their fares. Then we had hosts of negro blunders, showing that half-simple, half-crafty race in a ludicrous and good-natured light, but never in an heroic, defiant, or intellectual attitude.

But I can illustrate all this better by specimens drawn from a popular jest-book, value twenty-five cents, sold by thousands last year at all the railway stations from New Jersey to New Orleans. It is a good specimen of the ordinary conversational fun of average people in America. It is neither better nor worse; it is adorned with the crudest wood-cuts, and is printed in the most economically large type. It is entitled

THE PORTFOLIO OF THE YOUNG 'UN, and the abridged extracts I give from it will be full of racy colloquialisms. I will call the first

THE VERMONT

(premising that Vermont is, par excellence, the latitat of the farmer of the Northern States, as Louisiana in the Southern States is of the sugar planter).

A knot of rowdies were standing on the end of a pier which runs into the Hudson river, in the outskirts of a small town near Albany, each trying to throw a stone farther into the stream than his neighbour, when suddenly a tall, rugged-built Vermont direct from the Green Hill came, and, joining in the amusement, quietly flung half a brick some yards farther than the best man of the party.

A fellow in a green jacket, the leader of the gang, who declared he wouldn't be beaten "by a feller right straight out o' the woods nohow," sidled up to the stranger and scraped an acquaintance (and the dialogue is true colloquial American):

"Where do you come from, neighbour?"

"Me? Wal, I hails from Varmount jes' now, friend."

"Hain't been in these parts long, I reck'n?"

"Wal, no, not edxactly *here*, but up and daown sorter. Yaas," heaving a big log of wood some rods from the shore.

"You've a little strength in your arms, neighbour?"

"I 'ave pumpkins in them flippers, stranger. Up in aour taown, more 'n a month ago, I druv them are knuckles rite strthru a board more 'n a ninch-'n-aff thick. Don't b'lieve it?"

"Haw! haw!" laughed the rowdies, "not much."

"We ain't *very* green down here in York," said the ringleader.

"Wal, jes' you look yere, friend; up in aour kounty we've a purty big river, considerin'. Injun river, it's called. Wal, I hove a man clean across that river t'other day, and he came daown clean and square on t'other side. Wal, you may laff, but I kin dew it again—like open and shut, too."

"Bet you ten dollars of it," said the head rowdy, covering the Vermont's shin plaister with the note of a broken-down-east bank.

"Kin you swim, feller?"

"Like a duck." Before the rowdy had well uttered the words, the Vermont had clutched him by the seat of his pants and the nape of his neck, and thrown him heels overhead ten yards into the Hudson.

Wet and shivering, the loafer scrambled to shore amid the jeers and screams of his companions, and instantly claimed the money.

"Wal, I rekun you wun't take no ten spots jest yet, capt'n," said the Vermont; "I didn't calkilate on dewin' it the fast time, but I tell you I kin dew it." And again he seized the loafer in his terrible grip, and threw him this time ten yards farther than the last.

Again, dripping and cowed, the bully crawled to shore.

"Third time never fails," said the Yankee, peeling off his coat; "I kin dew it, I tell yer, and I *will* dew it if I try till to-morrow mornin'." "Hold on! I give it up—take the money," said the defeated rowdy.

The Vermont, coolly pocketing the "ten spots," remarked, as he turned away with a grin, "We ain't much acquainted with yeu smart folks daoun here 'n York, but we sometimes take the starch aout 'em up aour way: p'raps you wunt try it on the stranger agin—I *reck'n* you wunt."

The next story I shall call

THE CINCINNATI HERO.

The Hoosiers and Corncrackers of Ohio are a brave and a wily race. On a raw October morning, a young man, in seedy black, appeared on the broad sloping shore at Cincinnati, and elbowed his way through the crowd to the water-side.

"Been on a bat (spree)?" said one bystander.

"Going to take a bath?" said another.

The young man, heeding no one, turned up his eyes to heaven, clasped his hands together, muttered some inarticulate words, probably of despair, and dashed himself into the river.

The loafers were appalled; but, ere a foot had moved, a second young man, more roughly dressed, ran into their midst, shrieking wildly, and demanding if any one had seen his brother.

Suddenly his eye fell on the man in seedy black floundering in the water, now some yards from shore.

"There he is! there he is!" he cried; "I'll save him or die. Ah!" And away he dashed into the turbid Ohio, striking out manfully. He soon reached his brother, fought with him in the water, and eventually dragged him to shore by the hair of his head, amid three irrepressible cheers from the spectators. The hero was exhausted—the would-be suicide almost insensible.

"No, he lives!" shouted out the shivering hero—"he lives! Again have I saved him! Ah!"

The sufferer was carried to the nearest store, and there, before a cheerful fire, soon restored to consciousness.

"Brandy! or he perishes—my brother!" cried the hero.

A dozen philanthropists ran for brandy.

"Whisky, or I die of cold!" said the hero.

And a dozen more ran for whisky.

"Oh, the agonies, gentlemen," said the hero, "I and my brother have suffered for the last ten months! Oh, the penury, the scorn, the starvation! But I draw a veil over the horrid past—for why should I give your feeling hearts one unnecessary pang?"

"Go on," shouted twenty voices.

"But, gentlemen, should I be ungrateful for such sympathy? Should a miserable pride bridle my tongue? We have seen better days; yes, sure, better days; but repeated losses have so weakened my poor brother's brain, that this is the second time I have saved his life this week. Ah!"

A moist-eyed man, with red hair, here stepped forward, and, with apologies, laid a silver dollar on the table (the rescuer bowed, and went on talking; his half drowned brother was moody and depressed). A second man put down a two, a third a five, dollar bill; there was soon a respectable pile, and all for the gallant and faithful youth who had risked his own life to save a brother's.

"Smart chaps," said a bystander from a suburban village, who saw the two brothers depart cheered by the sympathising crowd.

"Why, do you know them?" said a second man, who had laid down the dollars pretty freely.

"Know them, sure I do. Why, those are the two fellers as go about saving each other's lives every day or two. They are the two smartest swimmers this side of the Alleghany Mountains."

My next is a New York story, and treats of a possible relation of the two heroic brothers of Cincinnati.

A New York loafer, the other day, being almost starved, and afraid of venturing into any bar-room, or eleven o'clock "restorator," for fear of being "booted," at last ventured into an eating booth near the market, magnetically drawn by the savour of fresh pies and roasted oysters. Boldly in he went, ordered a fowl of "Old Java," swallowed a dish of the best Shrewsbury oysters, gulped down six sandwiches, topped off with the biggest half-plate of pumpkin pie, then called for two of the best "Golden Lion" cigars, and pronounced everything darned capital—excellent. The proprietor, not accustomed to such patrons, gloated over the impending four and sixpence.

Suddenly the loafer's face, staring out of window, became convulsed, and roaring out, "Thunder! there goes my horse!" he ran down the street, whip in hand, fleet as an Indian scout.

By the latest accounts, our epicurean and excitable friend has not yet recovered his horse.

And now I will give in dialogue the latest "nigger" story, the point of which is simple enough, and not in itself worth quoting. I will call it

A DARKY'S BULL.

Two burly whitewashers met in Broad-street, New York, and the following conversation took place:

"Look yeah, Zeke, you knows Roob Guffum?"

"Wal, I duzn't know nobody else."

"Wal, Roob and dis chile had a splay ob scientific poozeleistics last night."

"Wot you call dem poozeleistics?"

"W'y, a set-to, niggah."

"Whar?"

"Down Long Wharf."

"Wal, wot o' dat?"

"Nuffin 'ticular, Sam, only I spec dis chile didn't make much by the peculashun."

"How's dat, Gumbo?"

"W'y, you see, Zeke, dat Roob Guffum wouldn't treat liquors round wen dis niggah ask him cibily, an' so I jest pulls his shapo down ober his forard."

"Wot den?"

"W'y, Sam, to tell you de troof, I spect I heard sum 'n drop on the pa'ment d'rectly afterwards, an' wen I turn round to ax what it wus, I found it wus dis niggah and nuffin shorter. Hi-yah!"

Now, these rude and simple stories, dull as they are, serve better to illustrate Negro-American and American-English than all the disquisitions in the world, or than all Murray or Webster ever penned. It is impossible to explain to an Englishman how clearly the use of "I guess," "I reckon," and "I calkilate," betray the peculiar state from which the speaker comes. The peculiar force of that extraordinary interjection, "Du-tell!" which sounds so like an entreaty, must be heard to be appreciated. The peculiar force of "Sure," "Yes, sir," "It is so," cannot well be described without examples.

The sly use of the word "some," as in "some corn," meant to indicate millions of bushels, is not more especially American than those strange metaphors, such as "Lively as a snapping turtle," or a "Heart as hard as a hickory nut, and as tender as a green-house flower." But it would take a volume to show how full of metaphors and sly dryness American conversation generally is.

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